Winter 2015

SCOOP magazine Winter 2015

College of Communication and Information

The Magazine of the University of Tennessee's College of Communication & Information

SCOOP

Winter 2014/2015

The Heroes' Journey

Documenting the 2014 Medal of Honor Project

VOLS FOR LIFE

Checking in with notable CCI alums

MIDNIGHT SNACKS

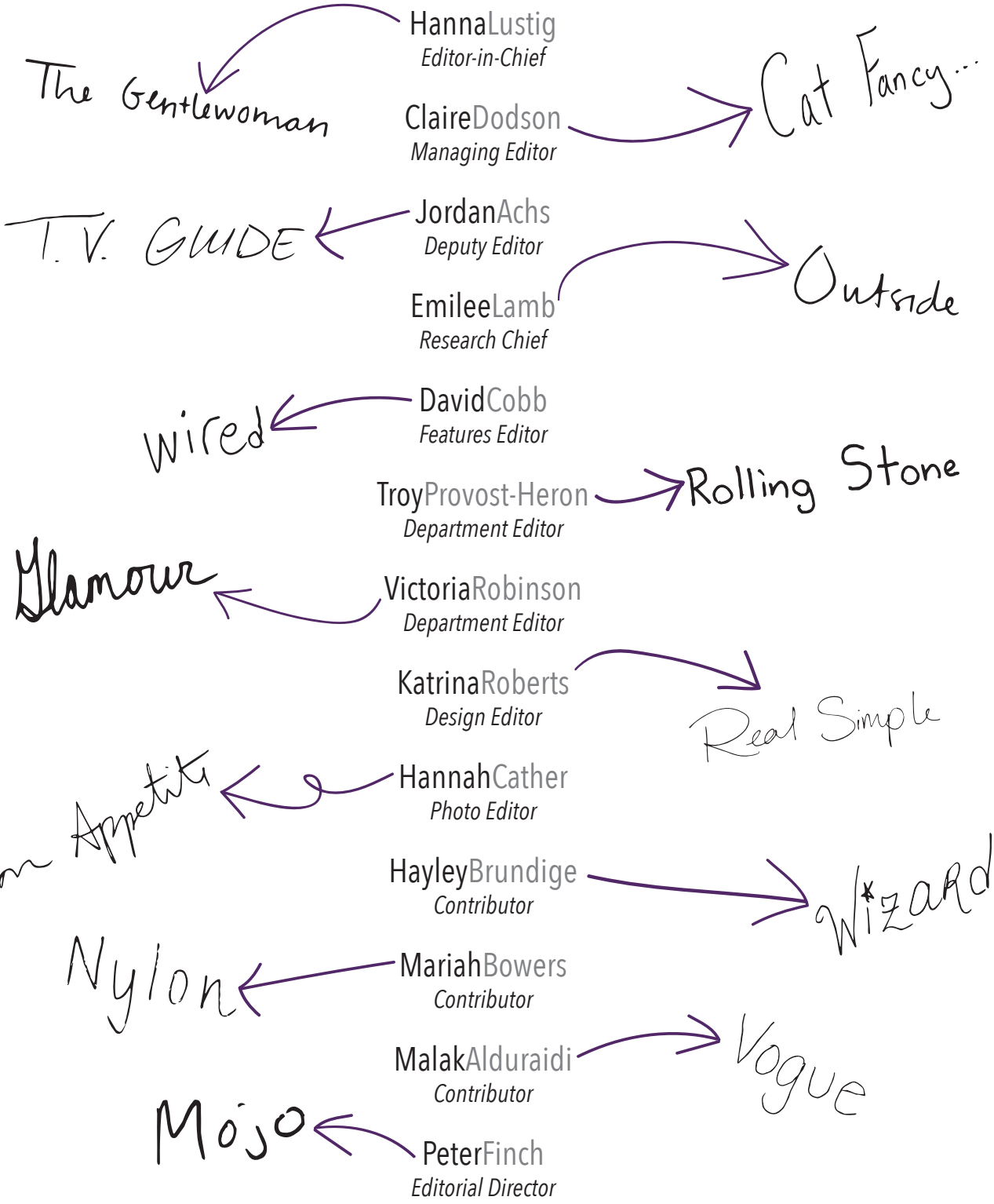
Students' latest fast-food addiction

SOCIAL MEDIA

Yik Yak, Tinder & more

Assistant Professor Nick Geidner

SCOOP



What is Scoop?

Scoop is a magazine published for College of Communication and Information alumni, students and faculty. It strives to keep readers up to date with what's happening around campus and in the University of Tennessee's School of Journalism and Electronic Media, School of Advertising and Public Relations, School of Communication Studies and School of Information Sciences. Scoop also functions as an educational tool for students interested in magazine journalism.

Which magazine title best describes you?

Dear reader,

Often, the most important events in our lives are the hardest to recall. My first day of class at UT, for example, is all but erased. Same for my first Volunteers football game and the moment I chose to join the Scoop staff two semesters ago.

These moments, so easily forgotten, now hold a certain nostalgic significance. They mattered, though I didn't yet know it.

In Scoop class, we, the students, are given an unlimited number of empty pages and total creative freedom—a rare opportunity for a motley crew of journalists-in-training. It's a privilege and, admittedly, a harrowing task. Every semester, Scoop begins as a blank slate, a question hanging in the air, a patch of uncultivated soil awaiting new growth.

Inside the white cinderblock walls of Classroom 310, I have watched this publication take shape—a gradual but rewarding process. Proudly I witnessed these pages fill with words, headlines, images and graphics produced by some of the most talented students I know. With immense help from one fearless editorial director (who, it's worth mentioning, is familiar with a sizable selection of Mary Kate and Ashley's discography), we created the polished magazine before you. It contains countless hours of work and worry, every one of them neatly preserved between these pages.

And that, I suppose, is the true beauty of Scoop. Though students come and go, this issue of Scoop lives on, a permanent relic of fall 2014. This magazine, unlike the many "firsts" of freshman year, will last forever.

Alumni, I hope you see yourselves in this magazine (some of you will, literally). I hope it conjures up fond memories of your time in this funny little college, a second home to us all. Students, I hope it reminds you to take pride in the people, places, innovations and issues that make this city and this university unique—exceptional, even.

But no matter who you are, I invite you to turn the page, dive in and read on. I'm biased, but I promise—it's worth it.

-Hanna Lustig
Editor-in-Chief

Front row from left: Hanna Lustig, Emilee Lamb, Hayley Brundige, Hannah Cather
Back row from left: David Cobb, Jordan Achs, Victoria Robinson, Katrina Roberts, Claire Dodson
Not pictured: Troy Provost-Heron, Malak Alduraidi and Mariah Bowers

Group photo by David McCarville

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Heather Dickson shoots during the Medal of Honor Convention.

Photo by Hannah Marley

Anonymity at Its Finest?

Yik Yak, a Twitter-like app, creates community and controversy at UT

BY VICTORIA ROBINSON

More than 240,000 active users, 150 campuses and one shaggy-haired animated mascot. This is what you'll find on Yik Yak, the polarizing social media app gaining traction nationwide. What you won't find are profile pictures and usernames.

Created in October 2013 by Furman University graduates Tyler Droll and Brooks Buffington, Yik Yak is an anonymous riff on Twitter. In Big Orange Country, Yik Yak has more than 5,400 active users who generate more than 20,500 daily yaks, up and down votes — equivalents to "likes" and "dislikes" — and replies.

The popularity and anonymity have caused some concern among administrators. On October 1, Dean of Student Life Melissa Shivers sent an email to the student body recognizing the stir Yik Yak has caused on campus as well as nationwide. "In recent weeks, universities across the country have been faced with the dilemma of addressing inappropriate use of social media apps such as Yik Yak, which allows subscribers to post anonymously," Shivers wrote. "Here and at other schools across the nation, students have utilized Yik Yak to spew hateful, racist, demeaning and even threatening comments."

Shivers continued by linking to a letter written by Student Government Association President Kelsey Keny explaining her stance on the app and the responsibility students have as Volunteers.

While Keny realizes Yik Yak is not solely used for negativity, she believes students hide behind its veil of anonymity as "a security blanket to use offensive language." Though Keny was not responding to a specific incident, she says she wrote the letter to urge students "to stop degrading each other."

"I'm proud our administrators wanted to at least take the opportunity to reach out and spread the message that we are above hurting each other in this way," Keny says. "This campus is our home, and if Yik Yak ever makes a student feel threatened or uncomfortable in this community, it's an injustice. My letter might not be the most popular message, but it's one I'm happy to stand up for."

Founders Droll and Buffington understand both the beauty and danger of the app's anonymity. Cyber bullying and targeting fellow classmates have been seen on the app, especially in high schools.

"The app doesn't work well when people are targeting each other, which we saw in high schools," Droll says. "We took it a step further than any app has ever done and actually shut off high schools."

If a yak receives more than five down votes, either the filter system or a moderation team, which is working constantly, immediately removes the offensive yak. Inside the app is a list of rules, stipulating that "You DO NOT bully or specifically target other yakkers."

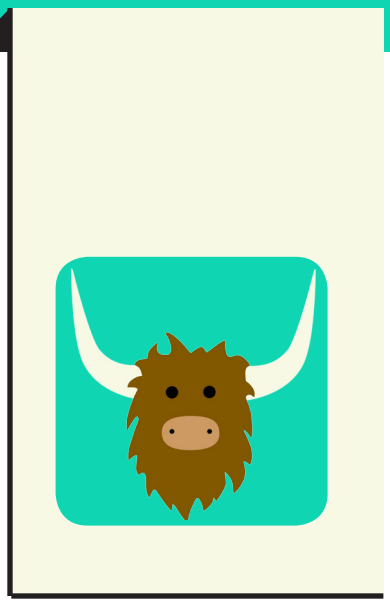
Moreover, if a post contains a person's name, phone number or any offensive language, the yak is removed from the feed. If a user continuously posts inappropriate yaks after an initial warning, a 30-minute suspension begins. Should violations continue, the suspension lengthens until it eventually results in a permanent ban.

With GPS enabling, users can see posts within a 1.5-mile radius. You can even "peek" into certain campuses' feeds for a specific game or newsworthy event, like the World Cup. Also within "peek," there are featured topics, such as Hogwarts and Interning Wolves of Wall Street, which contain posts from yakkers nationwide.

The founders of Yik Yak say they were inspired by comical Twitter accounts on the Furman campus. These accounts were run anonymously and boasted thousands of followers. The UT equivalents are @UTKcrushes, @UTKprobs and the like.

"My thought was there have to be more than these few funny people on campus," says Droll, CEO and co-founder. "There is no way there are only five funny people. So why not give everyone the power to send out these funny messages about campus life and relevant news tidbits and have them instantly shown to thousands of students around them?"

Back in Knoxville, UT senior Robby Billings is an avid yakker who once raked in 487 upvotes on a single yak. "I started using Yik Yak last spring when it originally hit UT's campus," Billings says. "It was spreading



around campus like wildfire, and I wanted to see what all the buzz was about. The whole anonymous bulletin board really intrigued me, and I thought it was an interesting way to give students an uncensored voice on campus."

Billings acknowledged the potential for bullying, but explains the app contains a built-in method for monitoring and controlling such behavior.

"The app is really governed by our students," Billings says. "I think people use it more as an anonymous Twitter. Most of the featured yaks are humorous, innocent jokes about student life at UT. If something is offensive, it will usually be down voted quickly and taken off the board."

The app also has been used to show kindness toward fellow students. When a University of Alabama student passed away after the unexpected tornadoes in Tuscaloosa, the UT community posted yaks in solidarity with the SEC rival university and its student body.

Droll and Buffington continue to receive funding and maintain sponsor relationships despite the negative commentary. As Yik Yak continues to grow in size and reach, their goal is to perfect the user experience and eliminate what Droll calls "champagne problems" like sporadic server crashes.

"They're problems, but problems for a good reason," says Droll. "So many people are using this site and it's popular and growing so quickly. We're having trouble keeping up with it."

With Amazon now overseeing the app's server, solutions for the app's bugs are in the works. Yik Yak, it seems, is here to stay—at least, for now.

"You could be the quietest person on campus but the most popular poster on Yik Yak," says Droll. "The only thing you are judged on is the content you have created, nothing else." S

Recent Top Yaks on Campus

The hardest thing about having a rolling backpack is untangling the wheels from all the panties that get thrown at it.

302

Why doesn't Vandy football have a website? They can't string three "W's" together.

174

help i've fallen

All GPA's should. have. life. alert.

164

Found out this morning I beat cancer for a second time. Feels so good to say that!

157

5,409

Active UT users

20,568

"Yaktivity" (all messages and up or down votes)

Note: Data as of Sept. 16, 2014

EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Think back to the good old days of desktop computers when even cell phones seemed futuristic.

"Mom, give me five more minutes! Please!"

Did you ever say this to your mom when she caught you on Myspace instead of doing your homework?

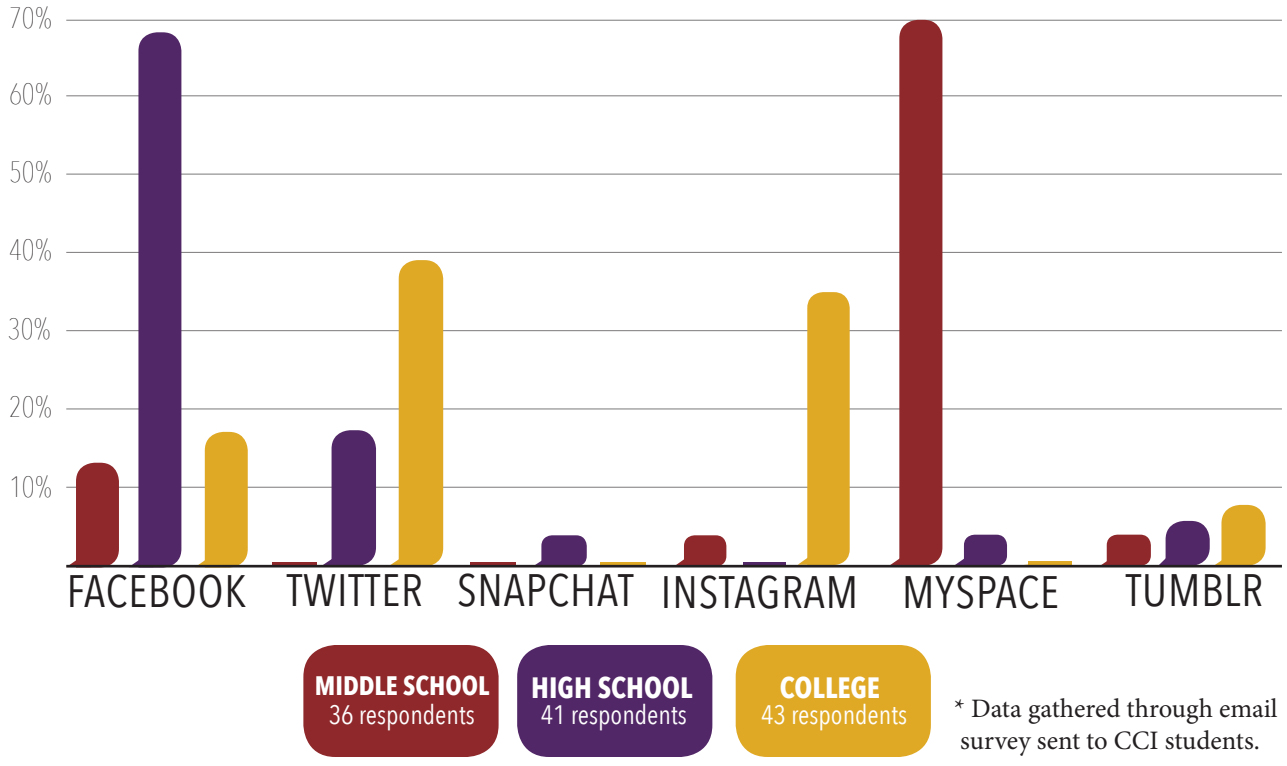
Now, bring your mind back to the present. How long do you spend picking that perfect filter on Instagram or getting that flawless selfie on Snapchat? How about the tireless hours of stalking your ex's new boyfriend or girlfriend on Facebook?

From seniors to freshman, the results are in and Scoop magazine has spoken. Once a privilege of one hour a day max, social media use now accounts for at least three to four hours of CCI students' daily routines. Some professors are even requiring social media use in their classrooms.

Along with embarrassing posts that are eternally online and constant humiliation from parents commenting on every single picture (uploaded and tagged), social media are a force that is second nature to most people now and will continue to evolve with the coming generations.

POLL BY VICTORIA ROBINSON

Percentage of CCI students regularly using each medium



* Data gathered through email survey sent to CCI students.

Q: HAVE YOU EVER POSTED SOMETHING YOU REGRETTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

"GAVE TOO MUCH OF AN OPINION ON SOMETHING."

"ACCIDENTALLY UPLOADED A PICTURE OF MYSELF IN MY UNDERWEAR ON SNAPCHAT IN MY STORY."

"WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I WOULD POST THINGS NOT EVEN REALIZING OR THINKING ABOUT WHAT I WOULD POST. PICTURES WITH FRIENDS THAT WERE NOT PROFESSIONAL."

"IRONIC HITLER MUSTACHE. IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FUNNY. NOBODY LIKED IT. :("

"IF I MISSPELL SOMETHIN ON TWITTER."

Q: HAVE YOUR PARENTS EVER EMBARASSED YOU ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

"MY MOM ALWAYS COMMENTS THAT HER 'BABY' IS GROWING UP. SHE DID IT ON PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS FROM SOMEONE ELSE'S WEDDING THAT I BARELY KNOW."

"SHARED MY PHOTOS TO THEIR OWN WALL, COMPLETE WITH ODD DESCRIPTION ABOUT BOYS OR OTHER PEOPLE IN THE PHOTO WITH ME."

"MY MOTHER BRAGS A LOT ABOUT ME ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND I WOULD RATHER KEEP THINGS PRIVATE."

The Search for Tinderfella

New dating app Tinder is changing the rules of the game

BY CLAIRE DODSON

Tinder is dating perfectly marketed to college students: The potential dates are plentiful, the rejections are subtle and the interface gives students at the University of Tennessee just enough space to impress a match (usually with a selfie clad in orange and a Go Vols in the bio).

Though Tinder has earned a reputation as an enabler of casual sex and cowardly communication, I decided to give it a try.

The First Date

I walked past the same cheap New York tourist shop three times before I talked myself into continuing down the street to the restaurant. As I approached, I kept sneaking glances at myself in shop windows, trying to imagine what a stranger would think of me.

Dating jitters are heightened when you are going to dinner with someone you met online.

The Premise

At 20, I cringed at the names of dating sites; eHarmony and ChristianMingle were for the desperate and unlucky in love. Then I stumbled upon Tinder, which my friends and I joined as a joke a few days before I left for a summer internship in New York City.

Tinder forces users to judge each other based on up to five pictures and a short bio. Because it works through Facebook, Tinder also lists mutual friends and interests between two users. Swipe left if you aren't immediately interested. Swipe right, and if the other person also swiped right on you, it's a match. From there, the users can message each other to make further plans. The possibilities are endless.

While in Knoxville, I was not tempted to take the app seriously and actually meet people—I could meet guys on my own, thank you very much. I also grew up hearing about the dangers of meeting people online and as a young female, was understandably paranoid.

But Tinder doesn't feel like a creepy dating site. It feels like a game.

What does Tinder say about Millennials?

Tinder is incredibly popular with the 18-24 demographic, which comprised 67 percent of its users in 2013. Compare that to Match.com's stats, where only 25 percent of the members are 18-24, according to Tinder cofounder Justin Mateen.

Tinder's game-like veneer is undoubtedly a large part of the appeal, but what do these numbers mean for Generation Y? When most media tackle this topic, they seem to point to our tendencies toward instant gratification and shallow judgment. However, Tinder seems actually less shallow than picking someone up at a bar—at least, after you make plans to meet.

When I met up with the guy in New York, I had to put any preconceived ideas about him and his appearance aside to hold an intelligent conversation. People are different in person than they are online, me included.

> "It's slightly inappropriate. It's not sure if it wants a hook-up or a relationship."

Back in Knoxville

Since I have been home, I've gone on several Tinder dates, with varying degrees of success. Regardless of whether I see the guy again after that evening, I am forced out of my comfort zone every time I meet someone new. Each time I have to get over myself, as well as my snap judgments of my date, in order to have a remotely good time.

At a time in my life where I am actively seeking new experiences and ways to grow, Tinder provides an opportune outlet. Like the majority of its users, Tinder is a 20-something. It's slightly inappropriate. It's not sure if it wants a hook-up or a relationship. It's admittedly a little shallow, but hey, aren't we all?

Taking Risks

For most of the summer, I swiped left and right haphazardly with no real intent of meeting anyone. I was still wary of the app, plus New York's Tinder seemed to have an overwhelming number of options. It was difficult to decide whether a guy was sincere just from a few pictures of him on the Brooklyn Bridge.

A surprising number of people were looking for dates or friendship. When a friend came to visit, she encouraged me to go on one Tinder date before I left the city. That's how I ended up not-so-subtly glancing around Herald Square, looking for a tall guy in a blue button-down.

Finally, we spotted each other and awkwardly introduced ourselves. He was Belgian, so when I went for a handshake, he went for a kiss on the cheek. Luckily, we laughed it off and ended up being able to engage in normal conversation like adults—it was actually a nice night. S

"You know, in ancient times they used boiling oil to make people talk."

"It still works today."

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Daily Beacon photo editor Hannah Cather and contributor Aalecia "Starr" Crittendon.

Students working in the The Volunteer Channel studios.

Journalism Jumpstart

Student media outlets provide 'real world' preparation for students

BY MARIAH BOWERS

Picture this: It's your senior year of college. You're pouring over your résumé, pruning it to send out to dozens of potential employers and desperately hoping one will launch your career in the media industry. Staring at this single, infinitely important sheet of paper, you recall countless times you were urged to get involved, obligated to fill this blank space with real-world journalism experience.

For McCord Pagan, a senior in journalism and electronic media, that experience has come in the form of student media, which he'll include on that decisive slip of paper.

"Classes just aren't enough," says Pagan, the social media editor at The Daily Beacon. "You have to have some kind of extracurricular activity."

Such activities are known to separate promising candidates from the slush pile of rejected applicants. In other colleges, they are treated as mere résumé fillers, mundane meetings with the promise of free pizza to follow. In the School of Journalism and Electronic Media, however, extracurriculars are a way of life and the gateway to further opportunities. With four major student-powered media outlets, fledgling journalists have ample opportunity to build a portfolio and learn vital professional lessons. Here, students learn through experience, a technique often more effective than any hour-long, PowerPoint-supplemented lecture.

JEM majors can explore any news medium that strikes their fancy — web aficionados find a home with the Tennessee Journalist (TNJN.com), broadcast buffs shine at The Volunteer Channel, radio fans thrive at WUTK and good old-fashioned news enthusiasts find mecca at The Daily Beacon.

Students have the liberty to take risks and grow as journalists in ways that will not be so freely given, or forgiven, in the "real" world. "You're held accountable by students, and the students know what they're doing—it's being challenged to tackle stories that seem intimidating at first, you're pushed to dig for stories," Pagan says. "Even if it crashes and burns, you just learn through your experience."

Moreover, student media are a place to discover how much you enjoy a specific medium or vocation.

"I knew that after I had gotten my first few stories published with TNJN that I loved being a journalist," says Jessica Carr, Arts and Culture Editor at TNJN. "Writing for it is what really made me realize that this is a field that I am passionate about. It allows us to give a voice to the voiceless in a sense. You have the power to tell their stories."

It's no secret that media work comes with little monetary benefit. Rather, what drives JEM students is the fulfillment they receive from seeing their name on work they're proud of. This determination fills the pages of the Beacon; it's uploaded live on TNJN.com, broadcast campus-wide from TVC and streamed through Knoxvillians' car speakers via WUTK.

"It's something we all feel passionate about," says Melodi Erdogan, copy editor and production artist at The Daily Beacon. "Being able to practice that passion through hard work and dedication to pursue one's dream is, at least to me, the most important part of being a journalism major."

Ultimately, it is the tangible, visible and audible work of student journalists, anchors, producers, hosts and deejays that separates them from fellow students, saturates their resumes and gets them hired upon graduation.

"It set me up for the real world," Pagan says. "I'm not ready by any means, but I feel better off than some." S

Daily Beacon photo by Eric Smith// TVC photo by TVC

Damian Messer hosts Marble City Radio Co.

Altering the Airwaves

Students create 'unique' on-air experience with Marble City Radio Co.

BY HANNA LUSTIG

On this dim Tuesday morning, the streets are clear, the sky is overcast and the city seems to be holding its breath, hushed, waiting for something to break the anxious silence. As I blearily drive to campus wearing clothes picked at random off my floor, I switch on the radio. Damian Messer's voice oozes from the speaker, filling the air with a cheerful, slightly gravelly baritone. He announces the next song, a track I don't recognize but enjoy nonetheless.

Already, Messer, a senior in journalism and electronic media, has been awake for hours—since 5 a.m., to be precise. I find him beside his co-host inside the sound booth, headphones on, talking energetically into the large, hanging microphone. He swivels to face me, grinning.

"So, would you like to interview us on air?" he asks, leading me to the adjoining booth.

Last year, the hour of air time now occupied by the Marble City Radio Co. offered only WUTK's standard mix of rock, Americana, hip-hop and electronica. It was an unmanned, pre-programmed playlist set to run until a deejay took over the following day. The daily seven-minute newscast, still in its infancy, aired only once a day in the afternoon— not exactly the hip, informative segment WUTK general manager Benny Smith had envisioned.

"One of the things that we've been lacking down here is a news presence," Smith says. "We wanted to marry our very hip approach to music with the news and information aspect."

But when Messer, a trusted student volunteer and a listener since middle school, proposed a madcap "off the cuff" morning variety show, Marble City Radio Co. neatly filled that void. "Not everybody wants to get up at 7 a.m.," Smith says. "He does."

Soon, I am donning my own pair of headphones and taking a seat beside Kara Sizemore, a senior in journalism and electronic media. She does the newscast once a week for academic credit with the rest of her classmates in Maria Fontenot's JEM 360 class.

Photo by Hanna Lustig

"Waking up for a class is a different story, but this, I don't even look at this as being required for a class," Sizemore says. "It's easy to get up in the morning and come here."

Because of Marble City, Sizemore is now considering a career in radio.

"They're having fun learning—what a concept—and making good radio," Smith says. "I think that's a lot of what WUTK is about."

On the other side of the glass pane, Messer and his co-host banter goofily, their signature brand of unapologetic informality on display. They spin typical classic rock fare, country, show tunes, live performances—the most obscure music Messer can find.

"We have a lineup, but it's not exclusive. We just come in and have fun. I think we stumble a bit, but it's all about letting go and not really caring."

Endearingly unpolished, slightly offbeat, the show is a blend of news, music and the occasional on-air interview. The name, a reference to Knoxville's now defunct marble industry, is what Messer calls "pleasantly hipsterish."

"I think it brings something unique to Knoxville. It's all about 'seat of the pants' radio," Messer says.

He stands up momentarily, peering through the window.

"We're going to go hot into the news, Kara!" he calls.

Nodding, she pulls on the headphones, waits for her cue, then reads the day's top stories.

"The first time we did it, it was really hard. I was freaking out. I've had classes learning about it, but you never actually talk out loud and get experience," Sizemore says later.

Yet, it seems the staff has overcome those first semester jitters, falling into a rhythm not altogether due to the ever-present music. They're a team now. They're an eclectic bunch of kids who built something together—something innovative, something to call their own. Something, they hope, will remain long after Messer graduates in May.

Holding up a single finger, Messer signals one minute until my Marble City debut. For a brief moment, I am part of their creation, too.

"We just love it, so gosh darn much, and I hope that's what comes across more than anything else," Messer says. "If I can give something to this radio station that survives after me, I'll be quite, quite happy." S

Other Specialty Shows Produced and Hosted Solely By Students at WUTK

SUNDAY	
10 a.m. – noon	The Hubert Smith Radio Show*
6 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Soul Power Old & New School Soul Show
8 p.m. – 10 p.m.	Simmer Down Reggae and World Music
10 p.m. – 12 a.m.	Gold Standard Hip Hop Show
MONDAY	
12 a.m. – 2 a.m.	Daydream Nation Shoegaze and More Music Show
5 p.m.	WUTK Newscast Drive at 5
7 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Rock Solid Sports
8 p.m. – 10 p.m.	The Indie Aisle
TUESDAY	
5 p.m.	WUTK Newscast Drive at 5
10 p.m. – 1 a.m.	Fire On the Mountain Jam Band Show
WEDNESDAY	
5 p.m.	WUTK Newscast Drive at 5
THURSDAY	
5 p.m.	WUTK Newscast Drive at 5
8 p.m. – 10 p.m.	The Mothership Funk & Old School Rap Show
FRIDAY	
5 p.m.	WUTK Newscast Drive at 5
7 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Rock Solid Sports
SATURDAY	
5 p.m. – 7 p.m.	Gramophonia Vinyl Records Show

*Non-student host; board operators and producers include students.

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Follow the Money

Daily Beacon sports editors pay a high price for trailing the Vols

Troy Provost-Heron (left) and Dargan Southard (right) hit the road.

Photo by Hannah Cather

BY EMILEE LAMB

Where the plush charter buses lead, Troy Provost-Heron and Dargan Southard follow. Daily Beacon sports editor and assistant sports editor, respectively, these student reporters travel the country to write about Volunteers—entirely on their own dime.

"Right out of the ol' wallet," says Provost-Heron, a junior in journalism and electronic media. "Does it stink that we have to pay for it all with our money? Sometimes. But the majority of the time, the $50 to $100 it costs to go is well worth what the trip was."

And so the two continue to take their seats at game after game. The road trips give them a chance to mingle with the big shots of the sports journalism world. The press box, explains Southard, a senior in journalism and electronic media, offers the chance to show fellow reporters from local and national outlets that Daily Beacon staffers can play ball.

"I mean, Neyland's two feet from here," Southard says frankly. "Anyone can walk two feet from here and go cover the game at Neyland, but it's when you go past that that people start to notice."

The chance to cover an SEC team is not one to be squandered over financial concerns, in Southard's opinion. The men's basketball team's journey through lasy year's postseason was so compelling he and fellow Beacon reporter Steven Cook shelled out more than $1,000 to follow the orange and white from start to finish, Atlanta to Indianapolis, with stops in Dayton and Raleigh in between.

"It kinda made me feel like a real journalist just because that's what everyone else was doing," Southard says. "All the guys that covered the team fulltime, that's what they were doing. I have to say driving through southeast Ohio and the whole state of West Virginia on a random Friday was pretty fun."

A $1,000 trip might be a rarity, but the costs of a fall semester covering football and basketball quickly add up. An average road trip generates approximately two standard stories for The Daily Beacon, putting $10 in each reporter's pocket. (That's what the Daily Beacon pays per article.) The idea they might break even from coverage on the road draws laughs from Southard and Provost-Heron.

The duo agree, however, each step outside the stately walls of UT affords them a priceless glimpse of the world they plan to join once they've bid farewell to their desks in the student newsroom. The lessons learned in pursuit of the story are well worth a couple of tanks of gas. S

The Dual Life of Andy Vinson

How one senior juggles a full-time job in UT's Marketing Department and his schoolwork

BY HANNAH CATHER

Andy Vinson will finish his journalism degree in December, but unlike many seniors, he's already landed a job. In fact, that job won't even carry him far from campus. Hired by UT's Marketing Department, Vinson is now a full-time member of its video production team, a position he will retain after graduating. Until then, his days are split between class and work in the editing office—a hectic lifestyle perhaps only the inexhaustible Vinson could manage.

Andy Vinson shoots footage in the HSS Amphitheater for a UT promotional video.

Photo by Hannah Cather

7 a.m. - Andy Vinson hits the snooze button twice before he rolls out of bed and starts the day. After a quick shower, he grabs his backpack, says goodbye to his mom and heads to work. "Living at home—it's a transitional stage," Vinson says, "but it still sounds sad and millennial."

8 - ish - There's a parking spot in the staff lot under Neyland Stadium, and Vinson snags it. Chuckling because he doesn't have to park in the commuter lots anymore, he heads to the Communications Building, where he'll spend the majority of his day working in UT's Marketing Department as a videographer/photographer. Occasionally, he leaves for a class.

8:30 a.m. - Vinson works in his own, dimly lit office in the back corner of the department. There aren't any windows, and Vinson hates the fluorescent lights overhead. Pieces of art made by his girlfriend, Sarah Smith, hang on the wall.

9 a.m. - Editing Suite Four is Vinson's second office—It's another windowless space, but he says it is actually better for the video editing process. "Another perk of this office: the speakers," Vinson says. Before joining the department, Vinson spent two years working at WUTK. Music is fundamental to his life.

10 a.m. - Vinson turns down the music he's playing (CHVRCHES) to shout to his coworker, Brian Notess, about footage he needs for the Big Orange Give project. Notess walks into the office with a flash drive, which Andy grabs before turning back to his computer.

10:15 a.m. - Notess comes back to retrieve the flash drive and rolls his eyes as Vinson yells "I'M SO POP!" Checking his Facebook frantically—as he does nearly everything—Vinson confirms his popularity: more than 1,000 friends. Notess remarks that Vinson "likes talking about all the people he knows."

11:30 a.m. - Vinson, Notess and Nick Chafin, another one of Vinson's coworkers, load a van with video equipment and go the amphitheater near the Humanities Building. They need footage for an upcoming campus promotion video. It's an overcast day, but they decide to set up the equipment anyway. The students walking by distract Vinson—fittingly, he knows most of them.

12:20 p.m. - The group gets back to the office with enough time to unload the van before Vinson leaves to take a test in his public relations class. He heads out, reviewing the material in a frenzy.

1:30 p.m - Vinson returns to the office with a piece of fried chicken hanging from his mouth. He grabbed lunch before meeting Leslie Cox, a classmate, who is going to interview him about being the first cameraman to work from the new SEC studio in the Brenda Thompson Athletic Center.

2 p.m - The Big Orange Give campaign is one of the Marketing Department's top projects. Vinson shows the almost-finished video to Lance Taylor, director of Annual Giving and Student Philanthropy. Taylor nods approvingly.

3 p.m - After the video meeting, Vinson returns to his video editing efforts and spends the next two hours working on an animation sequence: He wants the $250,000 to twist, turn and look 3D.

5 p.m - Vinson finishes work and meets Smith, whom he's been dating for three years, in the Art and Architecture Building. They chat about their day while Vinson sticks his finger in the paint on Smith's desk. Smith rolls her eyes and giggles.

5:30 p.m - Vinson leaves Smith and walks back to the staff parking lot. He listens to podcasts— his favorite is James Bonding on the Nerdist Network—on his way home and narrowly avoids rush hour traffic.

6 p.m - Back at his parents' place, Vinson laces up his sneakers for a mile run. "It's a new habit, but I'm trying." After his run, Vinson comes home for dinner: Mediterranean chicken with couscous, grilled asparagus and rolls.

8 p.m - Homework calls, and Vinson turns to his media law reading. He spends an hour focusing as hard as possible.

9 p.m - David Vinson, Andy's dad, suggests they watch a movie. "We have a lot of pop culture crossovers," Vinson explains. They watch "Ghostbusters" tonight.

11 p.m - Vinson gets ready for bed. His brain won't slow down, so he turns to social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Tonight, he's asleep before 2 a.m.

Space Cowboys

Eventually there will be a parking spot for everyone. Until then, CCI students are driving in circles

BY DAVID COBB

The road to better parking is paved with inconvenience.

You won't find this written in the University of Tennessee's "Hilltopics" student handbook or stated so bluntly by administrators. But students in the College of Communication and Information were reminded of its truth at the beginning of the fall semester as they circled the G-10 commuter parking garage searching unsuccessfully for parking spaces.

Widespread construction so altered the campus infrastructure and rearranged parking that by 11 a.m. for the first several weeks of class, all parking spaces in the behemoth structure beside Neyland Stadium were filled.

"It was definitely the worst I've ever seen it," says Haley Parks, a senior in communication studies in her third year as a commuter student. "Some days we would drive around in there for 20 minutes and still not find a spot. Or if you did get one it was because you followed someone who was walking to their car."

Like most students in CCI, Parks spends a lot of time in class at the communications building in Circle Park, and the G-10 garage is the only mass parking option close by.

To avoid being late to class or walking long distances, Parks began carpooling with friends from her apartment complex near the UT Medical Center this semester. That way, if no convenient parking were available, the driver could drop passengers near their classes before parking behind fraternity row, where officials designated 75 spaces as commuter parking Sept. 2.

"Better that one person be late or super early to their class than for three people to all miss because they can't find a space," Parks says.

By late September—a month into the semester—spaces in the garage started becoming available at peak times. That's a week or two longer than usual, according to director of parking services Mark Hairr.

"In regard to commuter parking, historically the highest demand is always during the first two to three weeks of classes in the fall as everyone is getting acclimated to campus, establishing their patterns and becoming familiar with the parking and bus system," Hairr says.

A 1,000-space garage on Volunteer Boulevard is expected to be completed by the summer of 2015 and should alleviate the beginning-of-semester woes. But it won't help Parks and other CCI seniors who have just one semester left.

Construction, it seems, is both the problem and the solution.

"That's just how it is," she says. "It's not just with parking. Our entire campus will be so much nicer in a few years after we're gone." S

2,000
Estimated enrollment in CCI

1,900
Estimated G-10 capacity

250
Number of steps from Communications Building to G-10

$24
Average parking ticket cost

THE COOK OUT ROUTE

How one fast-food chain became a UT cultural staple

BY HANNA LUSTIG

They arrive in droves, descending on the Strip as if drawn to the harsh, neon light of glowing signs. They meander down Cumberland Avenue, perhaps pausing to toss back a drink at Tin Roof or pick up some cigarettes at Walgreens. The air is thick with humidity and shouting and the noise of cars rushing, rushing by.

Amid the chaos, a certain warm, enveloping scent gently wafts from somewhere further down the street. The pilgrims follow, forgoing McDonald's and Chipotle and Wendy's and habitually bypassing Krystal and Taco Bell without a second glance.

They have but one, unspoken destination in mind: Cook Out, the fast-food chain collectively revered by UT students.

Among those devotees is Cody Woodside, a junior in journalism, who eats there at least once a week. Upon arriving in Knoxville his freshman year, Woodside was promptly informed that eating at Cook Out was a UT rite of passage. Today, he can spout his go-to order in a single breath, clearly recited many times before.

"A chicken sandwich, with Cajun fries and a chicken quesadilla and then a huge sweet tea," he says, grinning.

Since opening in 2011, Cook Out is perpetually busy, every inch of floor space crowded with chattering, hungry patrons. Behind the counter, a weary-looking, visor-clad employee kindly takes their orders, while another deftly distributes hamburgers, quesadillas and corndogs in a fluid, studied rhythm.

Cook Out, Woodside explains, is iconic for good reason: familiar Styrofoam boxes stuffed with hot, foil-wrapped food, $3 milkshakes dense enough to merit a spoon and prices so low you wonder how it stays in business. Fast, tasty and reliable.

Cook Out is a beloved certainty on an ever-changing street of bars and eateries.

"If I'm having a bad time, I might just stop by Cook Out and drown my sorrows in Cajun seasoning," Woodside says.

For fellow junior in journalism Annie Carr, Cook Out devotion was less immediate.

"I think it took going back a few more times for me to reach the level of Cook Out addiction which I suffer today," Carr says.

"At some point it just became such a big part of my life, because I ate it all the time."

In fact, it wasn't until her sophomore year that Carr began eating there more regularly, joining the legion of fans lucky enough to live near a location in the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky or Tennessee—the region Carr calls "the Cook Out bubble."

"Here, everyone is part of the Cook Out cult. But it's cool, too, because it's not really a thing that everybody has across the country. We all feel this bond over our cheap, greasy, really great food," Carr says.

Carr has friends who attend ETSU and King College, both universities located near other Cook Out locations.

"But, I'm just being honest, I don't see the same kind of devotion we have to it," Carr admits.

It seems there is something specific to Knoxville, then, something underlying Cook Out's unique allure to UT students.

"Cook Out is probably one of the greatest traditions at Tennessee," Woodside says. "Screw painting the rock. People want to eat Cook Out drunk at 4 o' clock in the morning on a Saturday. That's the University of Tennessee."

Perhaps the real source of Cook Out's charm lies not in its menu or its proximity, but in the memories of its customers. Long after diplomas have been mailed and students move away for jobs and internships, those memories remain, immortalizing an otherwise unremarkable burger joint.

"Going back to Cook Out is like revisiting freshman year, whether I'm going after a party or I'm going in between a shift at work. It's a cheap way to go back to the times before you had to worry about getting internships and jobs," Woodside says.

Cook Out has captivated the hearts and arteries of UT's students. And it will likely continue doing so for years to come.

"People go to Cook Out because that's what the people before them did," Woodside says. "And that's what the people after them are going to do." S

"Uncle" Chris Plante at home in the Fourth and Gill neighborhood.

P

Meet Uncl

He's familiar, that older man in the back of your night class. You recognize that face, that signature ensemble, that odd moniker: Uncle Chris. You've seen him a couple times before. He hangs around the Humanities building fountain, sometimes, or sits on a bench in Circle Park, chain smoking L & M Menthols. In the dim, early evening light, the smoke oozes from his lips and curls toward the sky.

Uncle Chris is a little forgetful, but he remembers you the second time you meet. He invites you to have a beer and sit on his back porch, though it's perhaps a little too cold this evening. He lives on Oklahoma Avenue in Old North Knoxville, an aging little street lined by trees in autumn splendor, orange and yellow leaves falling elegantly onto the sidewalk. His leaning house is sandwiched between the homes of new families and young, socially conscious vegetarian couple and college students who enjoy living off the beaten path.

He would stick out anywhere, of course. He's unmistakable, this 61-year-old relic of the hippie era, this Vietnam-era veteran. (He was in the Navy, but he never saw action—he just worked in communications and, he says, sold weed to his comrades.). He makes you dinner once—chili and cornbread, family recipes. Sinking into the corner of his dark red couch, he offers to discuss anything you'd like to know.

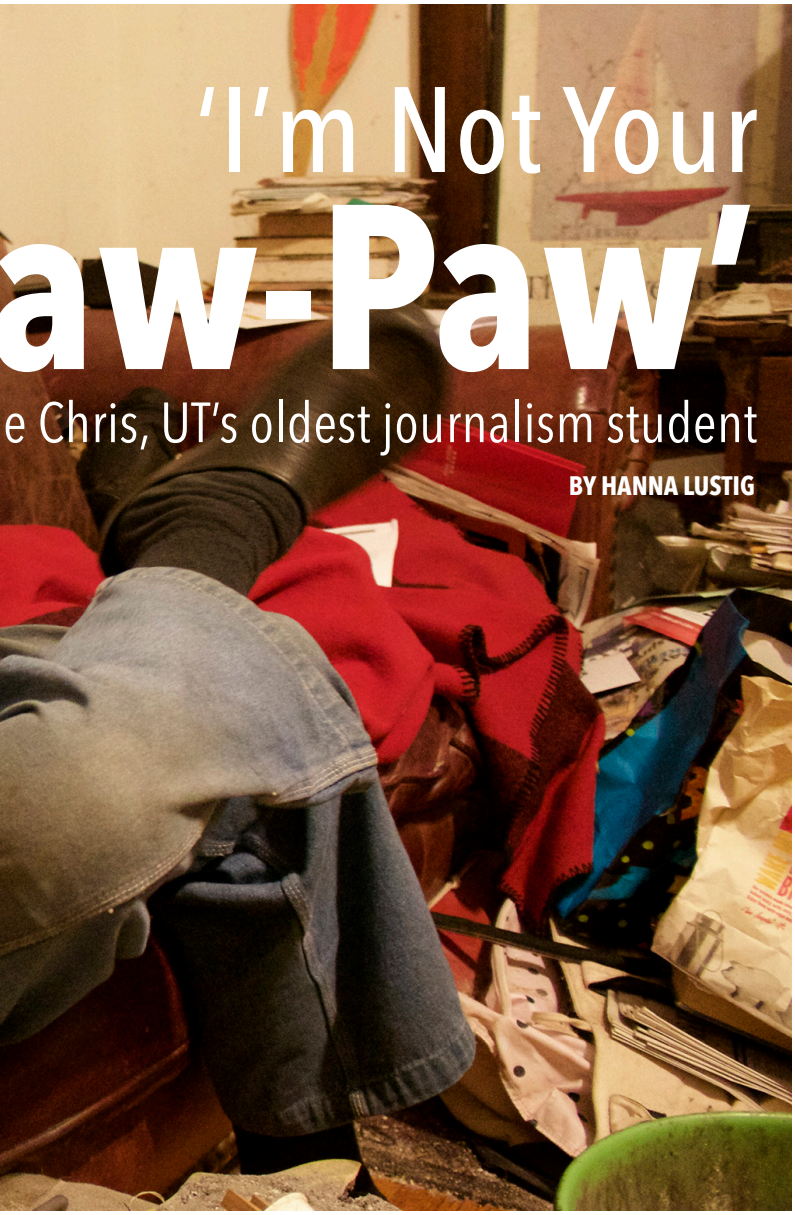
The house on Oklahoma is a palace of hoarded possessions. Every surface is coated with clutter: Christmas cards and juice bottles lined up neatly on the mantelpiece and a Happy Meal toy and VCR tapes and prints of his photography and a moldy loaf of bread and a pile of dishes towering high above the dirty kitchen sink. He apologizes for the disarray but doesn't seem to mind it. He is content here, in this frenetic, haphazard mess of preserved memories. "I get rid of nothing," he chuckles.

He unzips the front pouch on his denim Liberty overalls, the centerpiece: prescription tinted aviator glasses, a long sleeved shirt topped with the overalls, a thrifted baseball cap, a short sleeved button down—preferably printed—thrown on top. His hair is long and scraggly and red and gray and silvery, and he keeps it tied back in a low ponytail.

"I call this my uniform," he says, zipping his lighter back into the pouch. "When you get old, what you need is more pockets. Trust me."

It's a strange uniform for a college student — but then, Uncle Chris is not your ordinary college student. He started here in the

Photo by Hanna Lustig



'I'm Not Your aw-Paw'

e Chris, UT's oldest journalism student

BY HANNA LUSTIG

early 1970s, shipped off to college by his hopeful parents. They wanted an engineer. He hated it, though, and joined the Navy specifically to escape. Today, he takes classes at UT not for a degree, but simply to hone his writing, maybe learn enough to land him another newspaper job somewhere. The government pays for the classes, he says. "Vocational rehab."

He's taking classes at UT to maybe, finally, become a journalist. He'll often repeat classes he finds particularly interesting. "Redundancy man," he says. "What if I didn't learn something the first time around or what if they came across something new?"

And in this fast-moving industry, always in flux, something is always new. He's a little behind on his technology skills, unable to use the digital camera gifted to him some months ago. It sits, untouched, in wait. He plans to decipher it eventually.

He wakes at 10 a.m. and watches the noon weather forecast before heading to class. He is often late to class, but he must watch the entirety of the broadcast on his blippy, crackling TV before leaving for Editing or Media Law or Journalism as Literature.

"And if I'm late, that's OK. Because anybody that's been dealing with me knows I'm probably gonna be late anyway," Uncle Chris says with a laugh.

On the first day of class, Uncle Chris introduces himself with his signature monologue: "I'm not your paw-paw, I'm not your professor. I'm not here to teach you anything, I'm here to learn with you."

Then, he looks searchingly around the classroom before launching into the next piece of his soliloquy, describing some anthropological theory he once read about, a theory stating all people with red hair are distantly related. "I see a lot of red hair in here," he says next. "Do you know that means we're cousins?"

He's made the same spiel multiple times. "And then at some point the line is, 'I'm probably a little bit old to be your cousin. Let's just say I'm gonna be your Uncle Chris,'" he finishes. "They're not sure what they're dealing with at that point, including the professor. Although they pretty much realize they got a loose cannon here."

The performance usually elicits smiles. He tends to break long silences by cracking jokes, spouting quips in his rumbling voice—a blend of smoker's growl and Southern twang. "I'm a laugh whore, I'm tellin' ya," he says.

Uncle Chris says he often doesn't show up for midterms or finals, but that isn't to say he doesn't care about journalism. In another life, he spent some time abroad as a photographer for the Pacific Daily News in Guam (he stayed after the war), filling the Sunday double truck every week and falling in love with the glistening, shimmering blue ocean. There was spirit in that water, he says.

"I turned a 13-month unaccompanied tour of Guam into a five year and one month tour of Guam. Just kept extending it and extending it. My parents were afraid I was going to stay there."

But he didn't stay. He returned in 1982 to become a father and slowly build a life in Knoxville. Once he stopped immortalizing his memories on film, though, he started stowing them away in receipts and ticket stubs—and then, everything. The abundance piles around him now, even outside on the patio, where he sits, nearly walled in with junk. A bag of driftwood and a stack of identical milk crates come to mind. He saved the driftwood for a future art project, he says—if he ever gets around to it.

The most prized possessions, however, are his prints of the photos he shot in Guam so many years ago. They remain, now, canonized on sturdy portfolio paper. They appear to be the only thing he takes care of—with his work, he is gentle, handling them delicately. "This one…," he says, pointing to a close-up of a crab, its pointy eyes squinting into the lens on a sunny Micronesian beach.

He flips to another image, a portrait of a father and son at the Navy base, leaning over a rifle together, clearly preparing for the child's first gunshot. On the back, the name Chris Plante is written in slanted, angular pencil scrawl beside the title, "Never Too Young." The image throws him into the past, back to Guam, and suddenly, you've lost him again. He never wanted to leave that place, he says, handing me a carton of raspberries—a little gift. He still dreams he might return, someday, to reclaim his old newspaper job and his life beside the sea.

He describes his memory as eidetic, meaning he can recall images and sounds vividly. "I can go back, try to remember and at some point I just push replay. I get to watch it again or hear it again."

And who knows? He just might. S

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From left: Melodi Erdogan, Rebecca Fechino and Samantha Coley

STYLE ON, VOLS

Student bloggers spotlight University of Tennessee fashionistas

BY HAYLEY BRUNDIGE

The next big thing in fashion might be found on campus, not the catwalk.

At more than 500 schools around the globe, undergraduate students are contributing to College Fashionista, a collaborative fashion blog that gives young "style gurus" a platform to showcase their writing, photography and sartorial flair.

Each week, three students—Melodi Erdogan, Samantha Coley and Rebecca Fechino—venture out with a camera and a singular mission: Document the fashion at the University of Tennessee. While trekking across campus hunting for trendy students to feature in a post, Erdogan is most drawn to unconventional outfits—ensembles other students wouldn't typically wear to class.

"If it's a Wednesday at 9 a.m. and I see someone in gaucho pants with a pattern in blue and pink, I'll be like 'Damn, that person's putting in effort," says Erdogan, a senior in journalism and electronic media.

Thus, a blog post is born. The gurus also adhere to themes for their posts, like "What to Wear" on Tuesdays, a weekly segment detailing how to dress for occasions. In other recurring posts like "Style Advice of the Week" or "All in the Details," the gurus are encouraged to explore fresh perspectives by approaching strangers—a task that can, at times, feel intimidating.

"Sometimes I get rejected," Erdogan says. "Sometimes people are uncomfortable with the photo or interview aspect, but normally I get a pretty good response."

When a style guru finishes her piece—perhaps an homage to turquoise bolo ties, animal print ponchos or the floral prints they can't resist—she sends her work to the editors at College Fashionista. Coley loves writing for a publication that allows self-expression within the structure of a true work experience, something she hasn't found in other internships.

"I'm so happy I'm writing for them, because I'm finally given free reign to write," Coley, a junior in journalism and electronic media, says. "Even though they edit my posts, I can't tell what's different. I read it and it sounds just like what I wrote."

To Erdogan, College Fashionista's brand of self-curated blogging speaks to a broader shift in the media industry.

"It's a new platform for the way online digital journalism is evolving," Erdogan explains. "It's not the formulaic, inverted pyramid style you might read in news stories."

Already, style gurus in countries like France, Scotland, the Philippines, Brazil, Australia and India are using the site to turn a mere hobby into a viable career. A messaging system on the back-end of the site allows the bloggers to swap fashion tips and network with like-minded trendsetters.

But the true value of College Fashionista lies in its egalitarian, grassroots approach to an industry that traditionally caters to the elite. Erdogan's posts prove that even in the Scruffy City, a town seemingly isolated from the glitzy fashion world, style matters.

"You can really take in the fact that clothing and style isn't just something that's attributed to wealth," Erdogan says. "It really is something everyone can take advantage of, especially when they're young and can experiment with their style."

And at the end of every post, the gurus sign off with College Fashionista's signature "Bon Voyage" to the student opening his or her dorm closet before a grueling day of class:

Style On. S

Photo by Hayley Brundige

THE NICK OF TIME

How one assistant professor channeled his passion for storytelling into the 2014 Medal of Honor Project

BY EMILEE LAMB

Assistant Professor Nick Geidner at work during the Medal of Honor Convention.

Photo by Hannah Marley

It's organized chaos. As Nick Geidner opens his office door, it is clear this is the office of an almost maniacally busy man.

Flyers accented with patriotic blue cover his desk. And his chairs. And his floor. Beside them lie black bags containing tripods, lenses, cameras and hard-drives. A dry-erase board still bears the black ink of planning and scheduling—intersecting lines match names with events, forming webs intelligible only to the man who drew them.

"I don't know if he has had a single thought that has not revolved around the Medal of Honor Project for however long he's been involved in it," says Annie Carr, a junior in journalism and electronic media and one of the several dedicated students Geidner has gathered under his tutelage. "He eats, sleeps, breathes, thinks everything Medal of Honor."

Geidner has just left one meeting and walked into another, settling into his mess with satisfaction. It's been an all-consuming semester for the assistant pro-

Nick Geidner chats with WBIR news anchor John Becker.

Photo by Jake Thompson

fessor in UT's School of Journalism and Electronic Media.

When Nick Geidner picked up the Knoxville News Sentinel a year and a half ago, a tiny blurb announced Knoxville as the next host city for the Medal of Honor Convention, and gave birth to what would become "The Medal of Honor Project." In its infancy, the project was just an idea among many Geidner discussed with his wife, Shelby.

"He really needed a project that he could feel he was in a community with, and he really wanted a project that he could work (on) with his students and be heavily involved with," Shelby Geidner says. "So I think he saw it as his big opportunity to do something different."

Countless emails, meetings and interviews later, Geidner stands at the helm of a student-driven journalism project that recorded the stories of many of the 42 living Congressional Medal of Honor recipients during their convergence on East Tennessee. The project is the first of its kind and aims to release a documentary in 2015 chronicling the 2014 Medal of Honor Convention.

Coverage and preparation for the convention, hosted in Knoxville from Sept. 10 to Sept. 13, have dominated Geidner's schedule for more than a year. In the spare moments between emails, phone calls and meetings, the project director also juggles his young family and myriad professional responsibilities.

"I guess I should get caught back up on all my work and return the emails I've been avoiding for months now," he says nonchalantly.

An interruption by Geidner's coworker Mike Wiseman draws him seamlessly from conversation into problem solving as the two debate the whereabouts of some missing cameras used only days before by a team of student journalists.

"Yesterday was worse. We were missing a hard-drive with a third, maybe half of our footage," Geidner explains with outward relief at finding the drive. "A couple thousand-dollar cameras, I mean I hope they're not gone, but they're a couple thousand dollars to replace. That hard-drive is completely irreplaceable."

A love for visual storytelling drove Geidner, a video man by trade but a photo man at heart, through years of school to a Ph.D. in mass communication from Ohio State University. As a master's student there, an opportunity to teach drew Geidner further into the world of academia. He found a calling instructing others in the profession to which he has dedicated himself.

> "I don't know if he's had a single thought that has not revolved around the Medal of Honor Project."

Now a research professor specializing in data visualization, a focus inspired by his wife's background in graphic design, Geidner finds his students' success more rewarding than any byline of his own.

Nichole Stevens, Geidner recalls, was one such apprentice. As part of Medal of Honor Convention programming, Stevens was tasked with producing a video narrating the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's kid-oriented "Character Development Program." The short film was set to be viewed by recipients and guests on the Neyland Stadium Jumbotron.

"To see that sigh of relief," Geidner says, "to see at least two Medal of Honor recipients come up to her and say, 'That was great. Really enjoyed it, great work. You should be very proud,' I mean, that was a much cooler moment than if I just produced an eight-minute video and threw it up there."

Since its first student interest meeting in April 2013, the Medal of Honor Project has been fueled by Geidner's passion for heroic stories and students' willingness to be the voices telling them. The scope of the project grew "organically" from a handful of con-

tributors interested in broadcast work to a team of 30 or more student journalists representing the full range of media, all dedicated to cementing a week's worth of patriotism into the digital record book.

Pull back the curtain on the project and you'll find Mike Wiseman, Geidner's right-hand man and the project's executive producer and production manager.

"It's kind of like he's my little brother, I'm his big brother," Wiseman says. "He handles all the schmoozing and all the people stuff. I handle the nerd stuff, the tech stuff. We seem to have a good symbiotic working relationship."

An Emmy-award winning producer, Wiseman was recruited by Geidner to "make sure nothing burned down or caught on fire."

There were never flames, but predictably, production didn't always go as planned.

"Absolutely everything that could have possibly happened to make my show not happen, happened," says Carr, a student producer for the project, as she candidly recalls her live broadcast from the convention's Sept. 12 autograph session with medal recipients.

"Times got moved and people got moved, and equipment wasn't working and it wasn't there, and at the moment it was awful. But we picked up, we dealt with it, and we got something out there."

And that's exactly the lesson Wiseman and Geidner wanted their students to understand.

The Medal of Honor Project, for Geidner, is ultimately an effort to break students free of a classroom environment he calls "sort of fake, sort of generic," and allow them to see what it really takes to make it in a notoriously competitive industry.

"When you're working for someone, you need to produce or there's going to be a hole," Geidner says frankly. "And if there's a hole, you failed and you're gonna get yelled at by multiple angry old men at the newspaper."

It's a harsh lesson Geidner learned through experience as a young photojournalist for the Warren Tribune Chronicle during his undergraduate days at Youngstown State University.

In what he still considers his grandest professional failing, Geidner went on assignment to shoot a group of international students attending a Mahoning Valley Scrappers baseball game. He snapped away, capturing image after image of the group's journey through classic Americana. The young Geidner returned to his photo desk triumphant, the thrill of the perfect shot still fresh in his mind.

"I got a great picture of this kid from Chernobyl eating a hot dog and watching baseball," Geidner muses. "I nailed it."

But his exuberance was shortlived. The Chronicle's then-sports editor had other thoughts on Geidner's photo coverage.

"He just said … 'What the hell were you thinking? You didn't get photos of the **god-d***** game at a god-d***** baseball game?"

From behind his camera lens pencil cup, Geidner says the incident formed a penchant for overshooting. The multitasker shows his colors as he checks computer and cellphone screens from behind an array of papers littered across his desk, framing him with the scattered fruits of his labor.

"With Nick," muses his wife Shelby, "he is always working."

CONVENTION TIMELINE

Some highlights from a busy Medal of Honor week

Sept. 9

Character Development Dinner in Neyland Stadium with students, teachers from across the state

Formerly a graphic journalist for the Louisville Courier-Journal, Shelby shifted her focus to the home with the arrival of the couple's young son, Henry, and the Medal of Honor Project, as omnipresent in the Geidner household as a second child.

"Nick and I are very close," Shelby says, "and, if anything, it gave us something to discuss at dinner."

And discuss they did. The Medal of Honor Project was the dominant topic of conversation between the two during its year-and-a-half latency. Shelby describes the project's growth as a slow build to what it has become, but Mike Wiseman knew from the beginning that project would be something special.

"Dr. Geidner is a huge military nerd," Wiseman asserts. "If you spend five minutes talking to the man you'll realize how passionate he is about this. It's just, it's one of the things, lightning in a bottle basically."

Although he is the son of a naval serviceman, Geidner says his father's time with the armed forces is simply a piece of his father's identity, not his own. Instead, he characterizes his fascination with the Medal of Honor recipients and their stories as a search for the answer to a question he finds mind-boggling. What drives a soldier to actions worthy of the Congressional Medal of Honor?

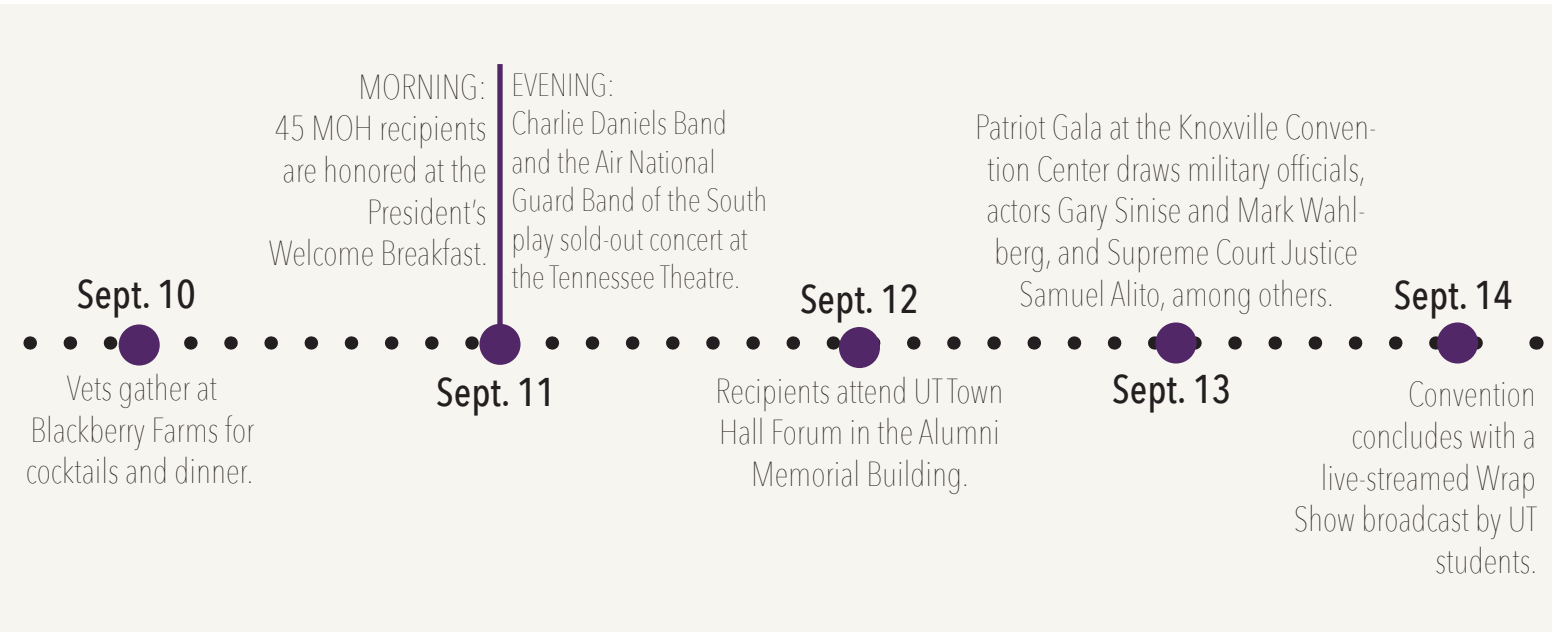
"These guys," Geidner puzzles, "the Medal of Honor recipients, they showed a level of commitment to the guy next to them in a way that I just can't wrap my head around."

It's a search Geidner continues as his project shifts into post-production. The class he was able to dedicate to the coverage of the convention is moving forward with work on its documentary, a process that begins with Geidner reliving the convention week digitally as he parses through the hours and hours of video accumulated by his students.

So begins the cycle of downloading, sorting, saving and downloading some more, taking short breaks to spend time with his wife and son, as Geidner works to congregate every piece of footage for his students and other outlets looking to use the project's work.

"So, yeah, it's over," says Shelby, amused, "but it hasn't really stopped."

Regardless of the tasks still to do, Geidner reached the peak of his year-and-a-half climb toward the Medal of Honor Convention and moved beyond it. Now he traverses the downhill path into limbo, a "weird" emptiness settling in place of the project's furious activity.



"It's really the same feeling as the wedding," Geidner says ironically. "A wedding is oncoming, it takes everything and then you get married and it's like, now what do I do with all that time?"

His intimate expertise on the Medal of Honor Convention and connection to the recipients will most likely carry him and a small team to the Boston convention in 2015, but that work is expected to be more of a teaching mission, carrying the initiative to memorialize the stories of American heroes to their cohorts in the North. For now, Geidner is enjoying his and his students' success.

But true to form, he doesn't expect to be bored for long.

"I'll always keep myself busy," Geidner says. "And hopefully do it in a way that I can provide opportunities for our students to do great journalism." S

Capturing the Medal of Honor

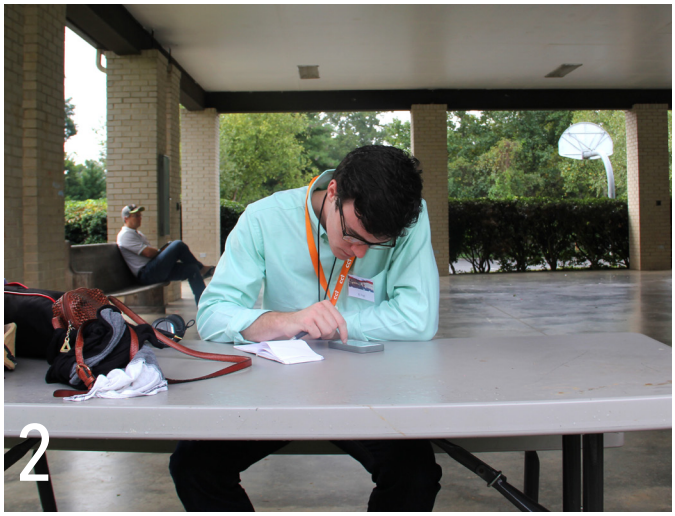
When Knoxville was chosen as the 2014 host city for the Medal of Honor Convention, assistant professor of journalism and electronic media Nick Geidner knew it needed to be documented.

And so he gathered a group of around 30 print and broadcast journalists to launch a collaborative multimedia project and accompanying documentary. From Sept. 10-13, these students interviewed, wrote, photographed, filmed and edited — all with the purpose of bringing to life the experiences of Medal of Honor recipients, their families and the people who made the four-day event possible.

The following images represent a glimpse into the work of these student journalists.

PHOTO ESSAY BY HANNAH CATHER / HANNAH MARLEY

Annie Carr works behind the scenes.



1. Jake Thompson prepares technology for Medal of Honor Town Hall in the Alumni Memorial Building.

2. R.J. Vogt generates notes on scene at Sacred Heart Cathedral School before Medal of Honor recipients arrive.

3. Abby Knight stands ready for taping.

4. Annie Carr interviews families attending the Medal of Honor parade.

5. Sarah Anderson focuses her camera during the autograph session.

6. Director of operations for The Volunteer Channel and JEM video production specialist Mike Wiseman, center, works behind the scenes in the Holiday Inn editing suite.


3


4


Telex

EXCITING
SURPRISING
INTERESTING
FUN
ENGAGING
ENTERTAINING
TIMELY
RELEVANT
INVOLVED

GIVE US A TURN
WE'LL KEEP YOU INFORMED

CCI ♥ NY

They came with and without employment, with and without a place to live, with and without companions–but all with the hope of making it in the nation's media capital

BY CLAIRE DODSON

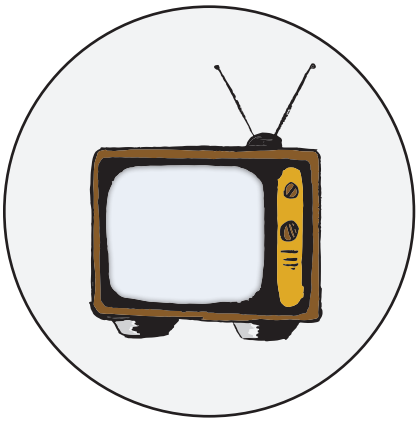
New York, New York.

It's the city that captures our collective imaginations, the city that has inspired a thousand songs, films and books, the city that drives many American industries, from the financial institutions on Wall Street to the towering media meccas near Times Square.

And for three young people from UT's College of Communication and Information, it's the city they want to call home. Rilwan Balogun (Class of '15), Victoria Wright (Class of '13) and Hillary McDaniels (Class of '11) have each left the Smoky Mountains for smoggy skyscrapers —and, they hope, a chance at success in the ultracompetitive field of journalism.

RILWAN BALOGUN

The internship that taught him to be a New Yorker



For Rilwan Balogun, a senior in journalism and electronic media, the dream was always to work in New York City. "I remember growing up I was like, 'I want to be in New York,'" Balogun says.

So he went -- first, as part of JEM professor Sam Swan's annual student trip to network with the largest media outlets in the country. As part of the week long excursion, an alumni dinner gave Balogun the opportunity to talk to an employee at NBC who told him to send along his resume and he would see what he could do.

With his experience working at The Volunteer Channel and WBIR-TV, Balogun passed through two rounds of interviews. Then, just when he assumed he hadn't been accepted, the call came. "I was in the car on the way to Atlanta, and I was just screaming, 'I got accepted!'" Balogun says. "I called my parents and they were like, 'Oh snap. He actually got it. Now we're going to have to pay for this stuff.'"

Five months after his trip to New York, he left his hometown of Nashville for a summer broadcasting internship at 30 Rockefeller Center. For nearly three months, Balogun accompanied producers as they worked on segments for "The Today Show," logging interviews and selecting sound bites the show frequently used. Working with the summer concert series was a particularly memorable experience, for which he arrived at 4:45 a.m. to assist with the performances and hung out with bands like 5 Seconds of Summer.

Despite his passion for working at "The Today Show," Balogun admits life in the city came at a price —and that cost might delay his move to the Big Apple. But that won't deter him from pursuing his dream job: anchor of NBC's "Nightly News."

"I had to look for somewhere new to live and everywhere I looked, the cheapest housing was $1,500," Balogun says. "I don't want to go to New York immediately because I'm not financially stable. I want to wait until I can support myself."

As for how long it takes to be a New Yorker, Balogun estimates a month and a half.

"Somebody asked me how to get somewhere and I said, 'Oh, you just take the B train (and) get off here,'" Balogun laughs. "And then I'm a New Yorker, I like to think."

VICTORIA WRIGHT

Making it in the belly of the beast

While some UT students move to New York with an internship or job lined up, Memphis native Victoria Wright left for the city in August 2013 with only her college degree and a passion for entertainment journalism. "Moving to any city by yourself is difficult," Wright says, "but New York is a different kind of beast."

Luckily, Wright had family in New York who offered her a place to stay, so the move "just made sense," as the majority of the entry level positions Wright came across were based in the city. She soon discovered that even part-time jobs were competitive, though she found a position within a week as a cocktail waitress.

It would be another five months or so before she found a journalism job, a time she describes as "discouraging."

"I had a certain ideal that I would come up here and was going to take on the city and get those big jobs right off the bat," Wright says. "It made me feel like I should never have come here."

She eventually landed an internship at a hip-hop magazine called The Source, where she wrote articles for the website and worked on social media. When it had no positions available after the term ended, she volunteered with the AIDS LifeCycle event in California and did a remote freelance PR project with the Memphis-based Southern Heritage Classic.

Now, she has moved from waitressing to a new part-time position as a spa coordinator and skin care consultant for a holistic health clinic; she'll also be helping it revamp its blog and website. Despite her difficulty in finding journalism-related employment, she remains set on working in journalism again eventually.

"For anything in life, if you want something, keep going," she says. "You have to be creative and willing to make sacrifices and stay open-minded about different ways of doing things."

And that open-mindedness, Wright says, should extend to location as well.

"I see so many people here who move and feel like they have to stay in New York just to stay in New York," Wright says. "For whatever reason they feel like there's a sense they may be failing if they leave. But you have to keep an open mind, maybe something's not working out here and it's okay to switch gears."

HILLARYMCDANIELS

From The Daily Beacon to Condé Nast in less than two years

Like Rilwan Balogun, Hillary McDaniels' first real New York experience came from Sam Swan and former magazine professor Elizabeth Hendrickson's trip to New York her senior year—though it was less romantic than Balogun's first look at the bustling city.

"There was snow everywhere," McDaniels laughs. "For starters I don't like snow, and this wasn't even picturesque snow. It was mounds of dirty, slushy snow piled on the streets. It was really gross."

McDaniels had not considered New York a realistic possibility—she thought she had waited too long to gain experience in magazines, since she didn't have journalism work experience until the summer before her senior year. "I had none of that feeling where I was like, 'I'm gonna graduate and then move to New York and work in magazines,'" McDaniels says. "At that point, I was like I don't know what I'm gonna do right now. I waited so long; I'm not gonna get a job."

But after working at The Daily Beacon and the Knoxville News Sentinel, she ended up with a high profile photo internship at Men's Journal, owned by Wenner Media. She and three fellow CCI grads and New York trippers moved to the city together, which she says gave them good connections with each other. "You realize who the people are that are really serious and are willing to make any kind of sacrifice needed to get to New York or just find a job in the industry," McDaniels says.

When her internship ended, however, she found herself without a job offer in the city. She moved back to Knoxville, where she worked in marketing and freelance design. Then, she connected via Twitter with an old friend who was looking for a place to live in New York. On April 1, 2012 she took the plunge and moved to the city, where she and her roommate spent the first night in their new (unfinished) apartment eating Lean Cuisines with their fingers and wrapping themselves in the clothes they brought with them because they didn't have blankets.

Neither had jobs.

"Nothing went right for those first couple of months," McDaniels says. "It was very difficult. Looking back, it's hilarious that we made it through."

She recalls calling her mom every day and wanting to take a bus back home. So she gave herself a year. "I was like, if I can make it a year and figure all this stuff out—I'll be good," McDaniels says. "But if it's been a year and it's not working out, I have to move somewhere else."

> “It’s not an episode of ‘Girls.’ It’s not going to be completely perfect.”

She eventually landed a marketing job but was laid off a week before Christmas, which she spent at home in Knoxville because no one was hiring between Christmas and New Year’s Day. Her one-year deadline was fast approaching, and she had only $70 to her name. After applying for jobs in January through websites like Ed2010 to no avail, she started to pack her bags.

Then, right before Winter Storm Nemo hit the city, she got a call from Lucky Magazine. The day of her interview, she trekked through the quickly accumulating snow in a light vintage coat and high heels. “I really thought they were going to say, ‘this girl is crazy. We are never going to hire her,’” she laughs. “But they did.”

Now, she recounts stories of New York Fashion Week, attending runway shows and interviewing celebrities. She writes regular content for the website and works with the web team to help it run as smoothly as possible. Lucky, she says, provides an alternative way of looking at fashion than say Vogue. McDaniels loves her job most when it allows her to introduce readers to small, unfamiliar brands or even feature readers’ personal style on the website.

“We really like to include as many people who aren’t us,” she says. “... Maybe this girl is doing her blog for her friends or whoever in Tennessee, but we get to highlight her on our website. That’s kind of cool. You get to be on LuckyMag.com.”

And speaking of Vogue, McDaniels confesses she gets a little starstruck when the magazine’s Editor-in-Chief, Anna Wintour, breezes past.

“Whenever I see her, I find myself holding my breath because I’m in the presence of someone super important,” McDaniels says. “She comes to our floor a lot because she’s close with our editor-in-chief, so it’s not like I’ve seen her twice. I’ve seen her quite often and I still get like that.”

Though she never imagined herself working in fashion—“I thought I was going to be that person writing about dogs wearing bunny costumes or something like that—McDaniels now embraces the Lucky approach to great style: Be yourself and enjoy what you wear.

“Looking back, now I see what I chose as my style in Tennessee was more reflective of the people around me and how I felt they thought I should dress,” she says. “Now I wear whatever I want to wear and what I’m comfortable in, even though I work in fashion.”

Like Balogun and Wright, McDaniels encourages students with big city dreams to be patient and stay the course.

“It’s not an episode of ‘Girls.’ It’s not going to be completely perfect.” McDaniels says. “You have to pay your dues before it becomes the bright shiny dream job.

“Well, actually, it may be an episode of ‘Girls.’” S

Sam Venable in his home office.

FINISHING STRONG

UT alum Sam Venable retires from the News Sentinel on a high note but with more stories to tell

BY DAVID COBB

Sam Venable thought his career would follow the standard trajectory—five years here, 10 years there. He'd bounce around and work his way up the newspaper industry's ink-stained ladder.

Instead, he carved out a foothold as a folksy storyteller with a hard-nosed journalistic instinct. And he did it in Knoxville, the city he proudly calls home.

After beginning his career at the Knoxville Journal while studying journalism at the University of Tennessee in the 1960s, Venable took a brief detour to Chattanooga before finding his niche—and a 45-year career—at the Knoxville News Sentinel.

At first he wrote about the outdoors for the sports section, but for the last 28 years, he's blended his passion for nature with coverage of anything and everything in the Knoxville area in the role of metro columnist. In doing so, managing editor Tom Chester says Venable "created his own language."

Although he officially retired in September (Venable still writes an occasional outdoors column and two metro columns a week as a freelancer), he saved some of his best work as a full-time News Sentinel employee for last.

Yes, Venable occasionally writes about chestnut oak acorns and manages to incorporate the term "bovine scatology" into his work more than you might think possible. But his series "Fragments of Hate," which ran in February 2014,

Photo by Hannah Cather

shed light on a dark incident in East Tennessee history—and the full extent of Venable's journalistic prowess.

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For years, Venable, 67, heard rumors about a black man who had been shot, unprovoked, by a Monroe County hillbilly in the late 1960s with no punishment ever coming against the shooter.

"I kept picking around at it," Venable says. "And it wasn't something that stayed on my mind all the time. But every now and then, once a year or every other year, I'd think about it."

After the 2013 Christmas holiday, Venable finally decided it was time to investigate those whispers by finding someone who remembered the shooting and he churned out a story in time for the the Jan. 21 paper on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

It would be a simple 400-450 word column with Sam's picture at the top, exactly like the ones that have run down the side of the News Sentinel's pages for years. At least it was supposed to be, until Venable paid a call to the Monroe County Courthouse to inquire about records of the incident. Water-damaged files battered by years deep in storage yielded a crucial discovery: the name of the man who had been shot, Charles Moulden.

The aging paper records, however, provided little insight to the crime beyond Moulden's name, and others in Monroe County seemingly suffered amnesia when Venable's questions probed beyond the surface of the shooting. Though nearly everyone associated with the court proceedings was dead, Venable suspected that Moulden might still be alive. He was right. Venable searched phonebooks and the Internet for anything that might lead him to Moulden.

"Then one day I got a hit, Charles L. Moulden, 70, Oak Ridge," Venable says. "I thought, 'Whoa, what are those odds?' So I kept Googling around until I found his address and a phone number. I rang that number off the damn wall for two or three days. No recording, no nothing. Just ring, ring, ring, ring."

Unwilling to relent, Venable drove to Oak Ridge. While searching for the house, he encountered a mailman who said Moulden often traveled for his job as a construction foreman. Venable returned to the newsroom and told News Sentinel editor Jack McElroy he was close to hitting the jackpot. The next day Sam walked into work and found the red light on his phone blinking. It was Charles Moulden calling from Columbia, Tenn., where he was working on a job. "When I got him on the phone, I looked up and McElroy was walking out of his office and I said, 'Jack, Jack, I got him!'"

Moulden agreed to meet Venable, and it quickly became apparent that this story would be more than a 400-450 word column. While discussing the events of April 10, 1968, the day Moulden was shot by a white stranger on the Tellico River and just six days after King's assassination, Moulden and Venable made a discovery that linked their pasts. They had played in the same high school football game the night Moulden broke the Knoxville Interscholastic League's (KIL) color barrier in 1963. "We're standing right there in my living room and I mean the chill bumps are coming out now on both of us," Venable says, the pace of his story quickening as he recounts how "Fragments of Hate" came together.

Despite numerous witnesses to the incident, the story of Moulden's shooting and how the suspect was acquitted was barely covered by media of the day. Five years earlier, Moulden made the newspaper for breaking the KIL color barrier. Regardless of their historic social implications, neither "made for TV story," as Venable described them, achieved any major notoriety beyond routine mention in the local newspapers. Better late than never, Venable thought. "I sat down with Chester and McElroy and they said, 'Just quit your column and just go with this thing,'" Venable says. "So I spent about three or four weeks working on this thing."

No one was ever held accountable for the shooting. A Monroe County jury found Fred Ellis not guilty. To this day, Moulden carries fragments of the bullet in his leg, hence, "Fragments of Hate." But now the story has been told thanks to Venable. It appeared in seven stories over three days from Feb. 23-25 and also was repackaged into a special print section.

"Next spring when all the contests roll around, they're going to plug that thing into everything they can," Venable says, sitting in his home office with a framed frontpage of the "Fragments of Hate" special section hanging on the wall. "But I told Jack, 'This is corny,

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> "We're standing right there in my living room and I mean the chill bumps are coming out now on both of us."

but I don't give a s*** if it doesn't win anything.' That guy's story got out. He has carried his bullet in his leg for 46 years and now someone has told his story. And that's priceless."

If it seems strange to move from writing about the outdoors to such a rich story requiring weeks of reporting, think again. For Venable, it's not. "That's Sam," former News Sentinel editor Harry Moskos says. "He could be somewhere and he could pick up on something and he's able to run with it and turn out an interesting piece. He's very talented, and he's just an all-around journalist."

And it's the way he's always been.

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A hush fell over the pews.

The child of a church member had been abducted and the congregation froze in a collective state of disbelief as a pastor shared the news and asked for prayers on behalf of the family involved.

"Dreadful, dreadful stuff," Mary Ann Venable says, recalling that Sunday morning in Chattanooga, where Sam worked as a cub police reporter at the Chattanooga News-Free Press 45 years ago.

Time has taxed the memory, and she is unsure of the specifics of the abduction. But there is a reason she tells the story — it defines her husband. As those around him bowed their heads in prayer, Venable's instincts took him in a less reverent direction. It's probably the same way he would react today. "I grabbed the bulletin and a pencil," he says, stealing the punchline. "I couldn't wait to get out of there." Venable mimicks the frantic handwriting motion he employed that day as he laughs about the memory. He was always looking for a story—even in church.

"He's a reporter," Mary Ann says. "If he wants to find out something, he's going to find out."

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At that time, Venable still believed he was on the first leg of a journalism journey that would take him who-knows-where.

The following year, then-News Sentinel sports editor Tom Siler hired Venable back to Knoxville as the outdoors editor, derailing Venable's initial vision for his future. Venable has been creating his own language ever since while also staying true to the journalistic instincts evident that day in church decades ago.

And he's turned down job offers in other cities that might have moved him up from the rung on the ladder he created. "He just fits in so well," says Moskos, Venable's boss from 1984-2001. "I think he would be much happier here than say, New York City. I think he's very visible as a member of the Knoxville community. I think he fits in with this area."

When he first entered the News Sentinel's newsroom, Venable estimates there were more than 100 employees in the editorial department. He's seen that number shrink dramatically as cuts have swept the newspaper industry with the advent of the Internet.

Given the mounted game that inhabit his home office, it's not surprising Venable makes an outdoor analogy when he assesses how content-aggregating online news sites are affecting the newspaper industry.

"I've always likened it to moss and lichens that grow on the bark of trees," he says. "The trees can exist just fine without that moss and lichen. But the moss and lichens need the tree to survive. Oddly enough, the very thing that's kind of feeding off of us can't live without us. We can live fine without them. They can't exist without us because we're providing the content."

Venable says he is not a "fatalist" about the newspaper industry like many of his peers. Neither is Moskos. "I just hope," Moskos says, "that newspapers continue to have people like Sam Venable on their staffs."

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The accolades Venable has amassed during his career are abundant. He is a 2014 inductee to the Tennessee Journalism Hall of Fame, a member of the East Tennessee Writers Hall of Fame and a 12-time author, to name only a few distinctions. He's not resting on his laurels, though. Old habits die hard.

"When ink flows through your veins instead of blood, there's always 'just one more' story to tell," he wrote. "It'll be that way 'til they seal my coffin." S

Photographs on display at the Tennessee State Museum.

The Examined Life

Glimpses of small-town living in LaFollette hit the big time in Nashville

BY KATRINA ROBERTS

Photos by Katrina Roberts

It's 7 a.m. on a crisp Friday morning in the spring of 1993. Professor Robert Heller stands outside the Communications Building distributing rolls of film and directions while delivering a pep talk to a group of students armed with cameras and a common goal—tell a story.

The setting of these stories is a 45-minute drive up I-75 north to LaFollette, Tenn., a town fewer than 8,000 people call home. Upon arrival, the advanced photojournalism students grab the local newspaper, the LaFollette Press, and scan the pages for things to photograph. Shortly thereafter, they are released to track down events, meet the locals and capture what Heller calls "life as it is lived" in this small southern community.

After a day and a half of non-stop shooting, their film is processed in the Communications Building at UT, where Heller selects the best photos and brings them back to LaFollette. There, Larry Smith, then publisher of the Press and an adjunct professor at UT, reserves an eight-page spread to showcase the students' work. And, thus, the inaugural "Eyes on LaFollette" Project is born.

Twenty-one years later, Heller greets a different group of sleepy faces and film is no longer necessary. The cameras are digital now, and the "Eyes on LaFollette" spread has grown from eight pages to 18.

Yet, the project's basic formula remains unchanged, featuring the lives of those who call LaFollette home. And in October, an exhibit spotlighting the best work from the last two decades opened at the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville.

To create the exhibit, Heller sifted through thousands of photographs, looking for moments that convey the essence of this place and this project. "[Visitors] might think, 'That goes on in my town, too,'" Heller says. "We share these kinds of things. There's a universality to people's lives."

In 2000, UT alumna Cory Schuren helped capture that universality. When she entered UT as an undergraduate in 1996, she was undecided about her career, but her experiences in college and with the Eyes on LaFollette Project helped her develop an ongoing love for photography, something she continues to use in her photography business, Friends in Photography.

"The most interesting way to tell a story through a photograph is the candidness of the photograph itself," Schuren says. "A picture that I've seen a lot of people using of mine is the veterinarian trimming the hamster's toenails … The expression on his face kind of says it all. He says, 'Am I really doing this? Am I really clipping this hamster's nails?'"

This photograph hung in the Nashville exhibit until it closed Nov. 30. It was surrounded by other animal-themed photos, as well as dozens of equally real, candid moments that told ordinary stories in a new way. Children danced, mechanics worked and the faces of LaFollette grinned from the walls of the two-month showcase.

For Bonnie Buffaloe, who went to LaFollette just before graduating with a communication studies degree in 2005, such moments blur the line between mundane and extraordinary. They happen in towns across America every day, she says, but often go unnoticed and undocumented.

"We were in schools, we were at barber shops, just regular everyday life," she says. "Kids playing a baseball game, or a choir practicing, or somebody getting a haircut, but if you get it at the right moment or from a different perspective, you can really catch something interesting."

EyesOnLaFollette

This spring marks the twentieth year that our professor has brought his advanced photojournalism students from UT to photograph life in LaFollette. Like many classes before us, we were taken on a journey into the unfamiliar in the hopes of capturing the extraordinary. The natural beauty of the landscape and the unbelievably wonderful weather inspired us from the moment of our arrival, but by our departure 30 hours later, we all agreed that the most memorable aspect of the project was the people met in the process.

Around every street corner and down every country road, we discovered it's not just the obvious charm that makes the people of LaFollette such great photo subjects. Rather, it's the subtle stories of life and labor told in the wrinkles of their hands, the quiet memories of love and loss twinkling in their eyes, and the modesty of authentic Tennessee life that surfaces in their manners and appearance. Through the lenses of our cameras, we attempted to capture a glimpse of this endearing character while also taking our final steps toward professional careers. It is our hope that these resulting pictures do justice to the lives and stories of LaFollette, and now it is our pleasure to share them with you.

2013 SARAH WALDRIP

Seventeen times between 1993 and now, advanced photojournalism students and Professor Robert Heller from The University of Tennessee School of Journalism and Electronic Media have travelled the interstate north from Knoxville about an hour and spent a day and a half documenting life in the small town of LaFollette. The local weekly newspaper very generously offers up room to publish a special edition of these photographs entitled "Eyes on LaFollette." Edited down from tens of thousands of photos, both film and digital, "Eyes" serves as a visual history of this community. There are no big stories, no important events--just life as it is lived everyday.

Preparation for this project begins earlier in the spring semester as we take a brief "research" trip to LaFollette and speak with staff members of the newspaper for a few hours. That discussion leads to story ideas, people to contact and a quick drive around town before returning home. Several weeks later, sometime during early April, students meet at the photo lab on a Friday morning at 7:30 a.m. After some instructions, we head out and get started. At the newspaper office, we gather for a group photo, look over that week's edition of the LaFollette Press and then begin a long day of searching for great photos. By dinner time, the students are exhausted and filled with stories of their encounters with townspeople. Over a pizza dinner, we talk about the photos they made and the day ahead. Accomodations are provided for us and an early bedtime allows the students to start again on Saturday morning.

Sunday sees us back in the photo lab to whittle down several thousand photos into a manageable amount. By the end of the day, themes become apparent and pages begin to emerge. During the next few days, the students spend as much spare time as possible working on editing, layout, design and writing captions and short stories. Thursday morning, one last look satisfies us, pages are finalized and e-mailed to the newspaper, and we await the printed special sections to appear in class the next week.

Twenty-one years, 250 students, seventeen editions and tens of thousands of photos add up to quite an achievement. We'll keep doing it as long as the people of LaFollette will have us.

1995 PHOTO BY BORIS CIBEJ

Exhibit introduction at the Tennessee State Museum.

The intimacy of these otherwise unremarkable encounters allows students to connect deeply with the people of LaFollette, through their camera lenses. Even more than learning how to take a good photo, students learn to build relationships with their subjects and each other. Alumnus Adam Brimer graduated in 2007 and still applies what he learned in LaFollette to his job as a digital communications coordinator for the University of Tennessee system.

"One of the biggest things that weekend taught me was the compassionate side of photography and being a photojournalist," Brimer says. "Connecting with your subject and being genuine, not just being there to get the photos … being there to form some kind of relationship, because that helps you develop better photos and tell a better story, ultimately."

Since that day in 1993, 250 students have traveled to LaFollette, Heller in tow. "Eyes on LaFollette," he says, was created to photograph "this little town where not a lot goes on." But it came to represent a broader search for honest and compelling stories.

"Every year I worry, will we be able to do as good as the one last year?" he muses. "And every year we do." S

Sportswriter Secrets

UT journalism professor explores bygone era of baseball writing

BY DAVID COBB

It was a grueling process that Amber Roessner can hardly wait to begin again.

Writing a book brought plenty of stress for Roessner, an assistant professor in UT's School of Journalism and Electronic Media, but when the final revision was made and the 248-page book titled "Inventing Baseball Heroes" hit bookstores in June, she was thrilled with how it turned out.

Roessner, a three-time graduate of the University of Georgia, heavily revised her doctoral dissertation on media treatment of early 20th century baseball stars to make it accessible to a general audience.

The relationship between sports journalists and the players they covered often surpassed the line from one of a professional nature to actual friendships that hindered the ability of the reporters to portray players like Ty Cobb and Christy Mathewson in anything except a flattering light.

As national celebrities, these players wielded a remarkable amount of influence on the Americans who followed them. Roessner felt it was important to look at how they were treated by the journalists who ultimately helped the public maintain its fascination with them.

Antiquated as the subject may seem, she believes it's part of a prevailing issue that students in her sports journalism courses at UT might encounter themselves.

"Sportswriting in that era, you were in such close proximity with the athletes you were covering that you formed and forged these friendships, and those friendships really handcuffed you from actually doing investigative journalism," Roessner says. "It's something that sports reporters to this day still experience on some scale."

Roessner credits the support of UT's College of Communication and Information for helping her make it through the publishing process. "As much of a challenge as it was, I'm very happy with the finished product," Roessner says.

And she's equally as enthusiastic about her next project, a look at the 1976 presidential election from the perspective of Jimmy Carter's campaign. Among her interviews for the book is Carter himself, now 90. That's the glamorous part.

Roessner will also spend hours combing through hundreds of boxes of material in the archives of presidential libraries. Asked if writing a book is exciting, she laughs. "It's an anxiety-ridden process," she says. "But it can be fun at times." S

CCI 2014 Diversity Week session in progress

It Takes All Kinds

CCI doesn't merely acknowledge diversity–it celebrates it

BY JORDAN ACHS

College is more than a place to pursue a degree, assistant journalism professor Erin Whiteside says—it's a chance to encounter and embrace unfamiliar people, places and ideas.

In celebration of that exchange, Whiteside always participates in the College of Communication and Information's annual Diversity and Inclusion Week held in late September.

The free four-day event, which targets the college's 1,200 undergraduate students, explores topics such as gender, religion and sexuality in the media through panel discussions and guest speakers. The week concludes with an all-campus festival featuring music, games and a barbecue.

Although many institutions know they must address diversity, Dr. Catherine Luther, associate dean for academic programs, says many don't address it thoroughly enough.

"But I think our goal is to really try to do something that's very substantive," Luther says. "And that's why we have these panel discussions that hopefully promote dialogue between individuals regarding really important issues involving diversity and inclusion."

A researcher on gender and sexuality in sports media, Whiteside has been involved with Diversity and Inclusion Week since its inception five years ago. This year, Whiteside moderated a discussion panel titled "Media Stereotypes: Women."

"The university is a space to have frank, sometimes uncomfortable conversations," Whiteside says. "It's such an important part of the learning process, so I hope that's what Diversity Week can provide for the students."

Luther, another five-year participant, agrees, saying issues that relate to individuals with diverse backgrounds and underrepresented populations—gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation—deserve greater awareness and discussion.

"I think that if we can even promote or encourage people to start talking about these issues, then we've made a really important step in the right direction," Luther says. "Because I think often times people just clamp down—they're afraid to discuss some of these issues. It's critical that we actually openly discuss thesm even if we're opposed and there might be a bit of conflict—I think that's healthy because in the end hopefully we'll come to some sort of understanding."

Ryan Bock, a senior in journalism and electronic media, liked the panel tackling diversity in the workplace postgraduation. "I enjoyed hearing from the recent UT graduates," Bock says. "It's nice to know that our communications degrees can be applied to a wide variety of career fields, even those we wouldn't expect."

However, Brandon Crawford, also a senior in journalism, wished the panel offered a more diverse representation of the college. "Although the panel members had jobs in high-quality companies like Verizon or Scripps, they were all in advertising or PR," Crawford says. "Didn't really speak too much for what I'm trying to do."

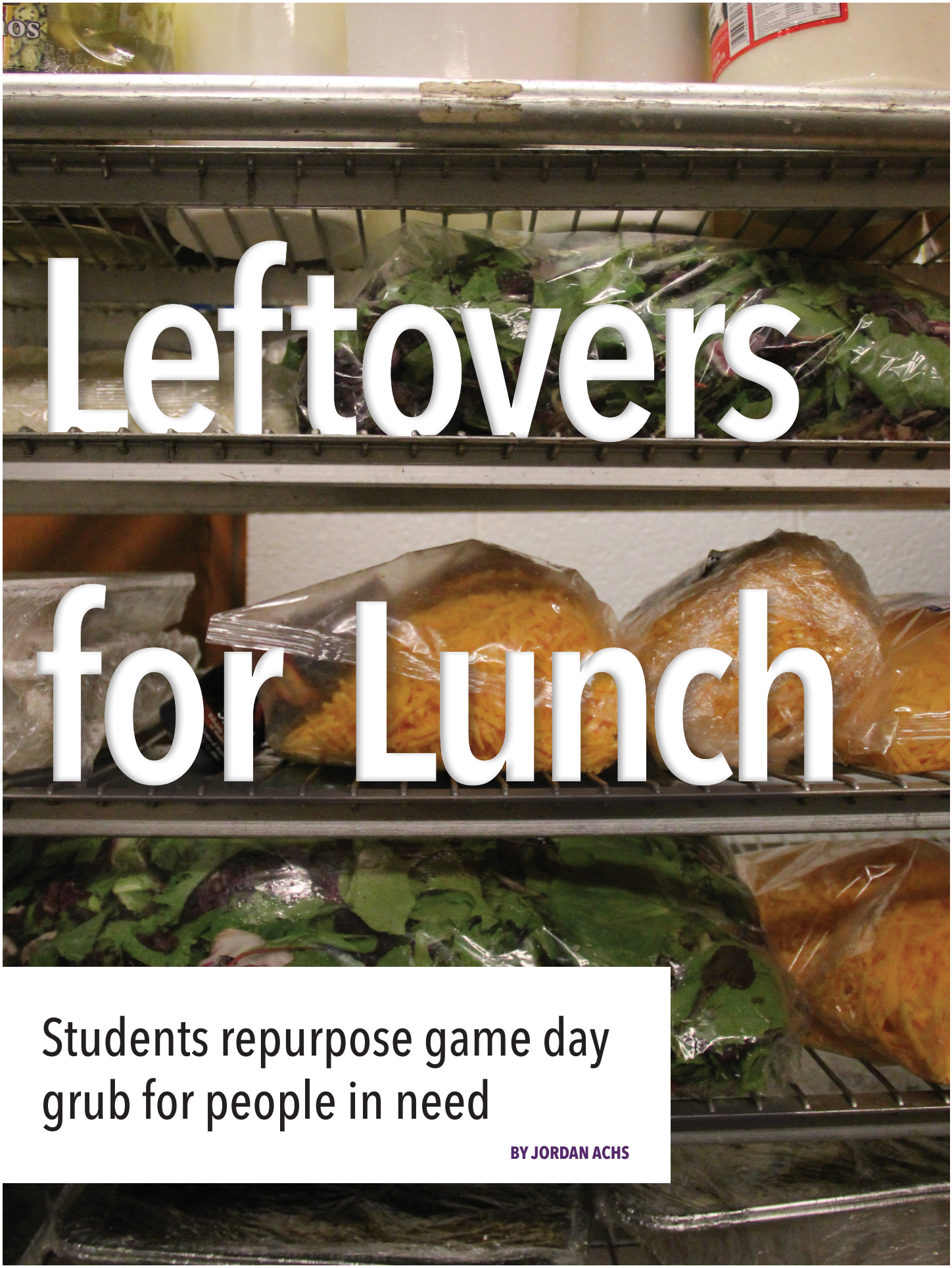
Programming for each year's Diversity and Inclusion Week is never the same, but Whiteside hopes students always leave the events a little more knowledgeable and sensitive than before. "I'd like students to leave Diversity and Inclusion Week thinking about those issues—going home and talking with their roommates about them, being out in a public space interacting with someone and something about Diversity Week comes to their mind."

It appears the buzz is working, boosting attendance every year and exciting Luther about the future of Diversity and Inclusion Week.

"I think that over the years it's grown in terms of attendance," Luther says. "And I think that the panel sessions—even though I have to say we do use our classes to ensure there's a bit of an audience—but I've noticed it's gone beyond just the students in the classroom. So I'll look around and I'll see individuals from across campus who are attending, which is really exciting.

"We're reaching out not only amongst the people in our college but elsewhere as well."

Photo by Donna Silvey



Leftovers for Lunch

Students repurpose game day grub for people in need

BY JORDAN ACHS

1. Mindy Reed covers trays of pork with plastic wrap.

2. Christina Moynihan stacks bags of lettuce.

3. One of the many carts full of food.

1

2

3

We are the Volunteers, an identity that isn't just reserved for our sports teams. UT students give their all for Tennessee outside the stadium, too.

Food Recovery Network is a national organization that reclaims surplus perishable food from college campuses and donates it to citizens in need rather than throwing it away.

Before the network was introduced to campus last year, UT composted 100 percent of its food waste. Composting, however, releases large amounts of methane gas — a greenhouse gas 20 times more harmful to our planet than the carbon dioxide from our cars, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says.

Mindy Reed, service chair for Vol Catholic, who participated in the organization's recovery after the UT-Alabama game, she witnessed gameday wastefulness first hand when she worked in UT's skyboxes her freshman year. "We threw away so much food, and it was just really sad," Reed says. "Because you see homeless people all over Knoxville, and to think that we throw away trays of food that could be given to them, it's really heartbreaking."

Ryan Brown, campus president of the Food Recovery Network, argues that such programs are particularly crucial for large universities like UT. In colleges across the country, he explains, students throw out about 42 million pounds of food while one in seven Americans live with food insecurity, unsure of where they will receive their meal.

"When you take that knowledge and look at Knoxville, you realize just how vital food assistance programs and organizations are to our community," Brown says.

In fact, food insecurity in Knoxville and the greater East Tennessee region is higher than the national average, Brown says, with approximately one in five people going hungry every day, many of whom are children.

Christina Moynihan, a first-time volunteer and senior in ecology and evolutionary biology, agrees with Brown. "I think it's important because a lot of the food we have we take for granted, and it does go to waste," says Moynihan. "(The) University of Tennessee is a big enough campus that we can do stuff like this

Photos by Hannah Cather

and really make an impact."

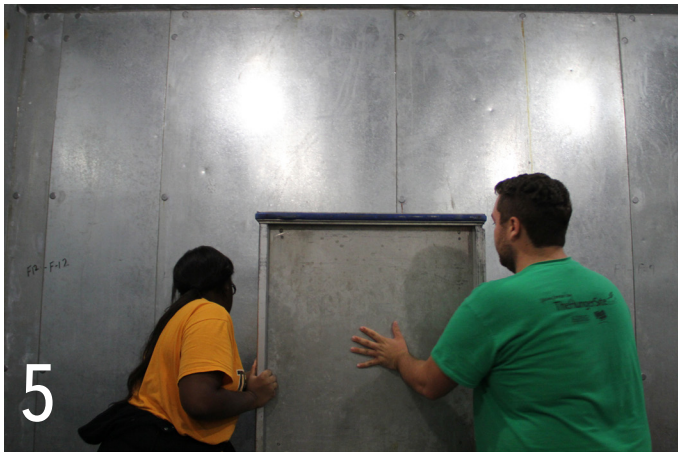
After Food Recovery Network collects food from sporting events and dining halls, volunteers and leadership team members keep it in a designated freezer in Thompson-Boling Arena. Next, the group weighs the food and coordinates with Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee, which retrieves the food using a refrigerated truck.

Currently, Second Harvest serves 18 East Tennessee counties, allowing the recovered food to reach local residents. The organization estimates 1.2 pounds of food constitutes a meal. "We can estimate that we've helped provide food to serve about 1,062 people in East Tennessee," Brown says.

The collection process is a fast-paced endeavor, with volunteers and leadership team members racing against time to ensure the food stays fresh while in transit. Additionally, leadership team members and volunteers must undergo training in food safety standards, including a strict two-hour window for food to be moved from the recovery zone to the freezer. Volunteers also must wear gloves when working with fresh food. Items not eligible for donation include home-canned items, perishable foods past the "use by" date (unless frozen), rusty or dented cans and donations from a donor who has experienced a recent power outage. "We have a very stringent process for determining what can and cannot be recovered," Brown says.

Although campus bureaucracy can often complicate the donation process, Brown says the group has garnered the support of administrators, Aramark and the athletic department.

"Together, we're trying to reduce food waste at UT and help alleviate hunger in our local community," Brown says. "We still have a long way to go, but we won't rest until we have helped everyone that we possibly can." S



4. Christina Moynihan notes the weight of a tray of mashed potatoes.

5. Cart pushed into place in the freezer.

6. Imani Chapman and Ryan Brown push a cart of food down Phillip Fulmer Way toward Thompson Boling Arena.

Photos by Hannah Cather

STOP SIGN

The Freedom Movement, raising awareness about human trafficking, arrives at UT

BY MALAK ALDURAIDI

You can surely imagine 1,128 seats in Neyland Stadium filled on game day. But can you picture 1,128 people from your school being sold into slavery?

Probably not—and if campaigns like the Freedom Movement succeed, you won't ever have to. The movement, founded by a group of Texas A&M students in 2012, is a grassroots anti-human trafficking campaign driven by a network of university chapters across the country. Last spring, senior political science major Taylor Flatt established a local chapter at UT to bring the Volunteers into the fight against slavery.

A study conducted in 2005 and 2009 states the estimated annual human trafficking revenue averages $32 billion, according to the International Labour Organization. "That's more than Nike, Starbucks and Google combined," Flatt says. "Every time these statistics come out, these numbers ... they hit you like a brick."

Flatt's primary focus, however, lies in tackling slavery locally first. The campaign aims to make a chain of 1,128 links, representing the number of children who are sex trafficked in Tennessee each year, and the chains we all have the responsibility to break. Knox County had more than 100 minor and 100 adult cases of sex trafficking in 2013, according to a Tennessee Bureau of Investigation study. Well-connected by main interstates, the city is becoming a hub for trafficking activity, Flatt says.

"The problem here in Knoxville looks different than it does internationally," says Flatt. "Internationally we see brothels, and girls in cages in red light districts...But here it's different. One of the biggest problems is domestic minor sex trafficking. It can look like children being sold from their homes by family members."

Flatt resolved to act. She started by contacting former camp friends from Texas A&M and Arkansas who currently have the Freedom Movement present on their campuses and they were eager to help charter the chapter at UT.

The idea spread to students in Jim Stovall's business journalism class, they were asked to write an e-book about a campus organization for high school students to read. UT senior journalism major Rachelle Blake chose to do her e-book about the Freedom Movement.

"After about a week of doing research we figured this is something we could get behind," Blake says. "This is something that we can enjoy telling people about. It is not something you have to be at UT to do."

The Freedom Movement also sells T-shirts, bracelets and chain links to raise money for its cause. The $1 bracelets have 27 beads on them, representing the estimated 27 million people who are enslaved today. Sara Grace Pelot, a junior in animal science, is an active member of the Freedom Movement. "I bought a link because I felt compelled to give money to a cause that is happening right here in Knoxville," Pelot says. "I think that's something worth supporting."

With each link sold, another ise broken. And as more chapters open on campuses across the country, the Freedom Movement grows stronger. "This is bigger than just the University of Tennessee, and it's bigger than being a college student," Flatt says. "It's doing something to impact people's lives." S

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Variety of snacks, basic health and beauty aids, and school supplies.

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Apple Gateway DELL TOSHIBA lenovo

• Presidential Store

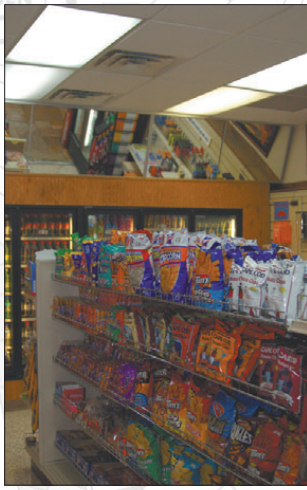
Variety of snacks, basic health and beauty aids, school supplies, apparel and gifts.

• Art & Architecture Store

Art and school supplies, snacks, drinks and more.

• Hess Hall Store

Variety of snacks, basic health and beauty aids, and school supplies.



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2014 Red Zone Workshops in the Baker Center.

Rebuilding UT's Sexual Assault Policy

Students join efforts by lawmakers, administrators to make campus safer

BY MARIAH BOWERS

It wasn't long after the University of Tennessee opened for the fall 2014 semester that the safety alerts began flooding the inboxes of nearly 40,000 students, faculty and staff. The notices, sent via email or text, were arriving with shocking regularity, making Volunteers across Knoxville wonder: Were more sexual assaults happening on campus than ever?

No, there was not a sudden spike in sexual assaults at UT. Rather there was a new rule mandating notification of every incident — one of many changes to university policy in the wake of a nationwide movement to combat campus assault.

Last year, a federal list of Title IX investigations was made public by the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights. The list originally consisted of 59 sexual assault cases at 55 schools. This number has since grown to 85 schools and 89 cases, some of which are more than three years old.

In response, leaders in Washington created the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault to assist colleges in meeting standards set via Title IX, Title VII, and the Clery Act with respect to sexual misconduct and relationship violence.

The University of Tennessee was not on the controversial list, but the school volunteered to reform its policies anyway. Thus, 2014 marked a period of policy reconstruction at UT. That meant reforming policies to reflect heightened responsibility for university employees to report every incident of sexual misconduct or relationship violence. To oversee this revision, a task force comprised of students and staff was appointed to draft UT's new sexual assault policy, as well to create an interim policy until the final draft is complete.

The nearly 60-page interim policy, enacted in late August, declares the university's stance against sexual misconduct on campus and includes everything from the definition of consent to reporting options and confidential sources.

UT Chancellor Jimmy Cheek has followed suit by creating a Sexual Misconduct Task Force of student and faculty members who will review and provide feedback on the interim policy. Making the reform on sexual assault policy a community project has started a student-led grassroots movement to create awareness of sexual assault on campus.

"The accessible policy tells students that UT has a system in place that creates a safe and welcoming learning environment," says Nickie Hackenbrack, Student Task Force member. "But students must educate themselves, learn about the procedures and resources, and understand what the definitions look like in real life to create a positive cultural shift."

Sexual Empowerment and Awareness at Tennessee (SEAT) leads the movement to create awareness by working closely with the UT administration to improve the interim policy. With one of its co-chairs serving on the Sexual Misconduct Task Force, SEAT collaborates with UTPD to improve language and awareness in the Safety Alert emails.

"We are constantly communicating with key decision makers on campus and believe that the work that we do on the education and awareness end will prepare students to access and interpret these policies, and to speak out when necessary to make sure that their needs are met," says Summer Awad, SEAT's co-chair.

The Red Zone Workshop, which drew 75 student attendees, was a chance to do just that. The Red Zone is the time of year between the beginning of the fall semester and Thanksgiving Break, in which students are most at risk for sexual assault.

At the workshop, which encompassed a full day of programming, students discussed sexual assault with peers and superiors alike. It was a full day of panel discussions on topics ranging from healthy relationships and dating violence to consent and assault and rape culture. Attendees also were provided Safe Zone training, active bystander training and information on trauma counseling for survivors.

SEAT's workshop created a local platform that opened conversation about UT's interim sexual assault policy. Student organizations like SEAT recognize local efforts ultimately stand to reform sexual assault policies on campuses across the nation.

The Red Zone Workshop is the group's first component in its plan to promote year-round sexual assault awareness, in conjunction with the controversial annual Sex Week in April.

"When freshmen are new to campus, they are new to alcohol and drugs and are largely uneducated about sexual assault due to inadequate sex education policies in Tennessee," Awad says. "Football season contributes to drinking and hookup culture, which is one of the main settings of sexual assault on our campus. Students are sorely unprepared to tackle these issues, and it is vital that they receive the correct information during such a risky time of year." S

Photo courtesy of Nicki Hackenbrack

Isaac Wright on a recent visit to Knoxville.

'Glutton for Punishment'

A PR major finds his place in the rough-and-tumble trenches of politics

BY HAYLEY BRUNDIGE

When Isaac Wright takes a risk, he doesn't worry about a safety net.

He dropped out of school twice, moved to Bourbon Street not realizing it was the worst place to sleep at night, and met his wife in line at a St. Louis restaurant. Yet, somehow, his only regret is getting a C in Intensive Spanish while at UT.

Wright, a 2003 UT graduate and the 2014 Public Relations Alumnus of the Year, is now the executive director of Correct the Record, where he leads a political action committee that defends potential Democratic presidential candidates from right-wing attacks.

The first time the West Tennessee native left school, he was a sophomore and a recently declared journalism and public relations major. On a study abroad trip to Edinburgh, Scotland, he was given the opportunity to join then-presidential candidate Al Gore's campaign as a summer communications intern. The one drawback: He would have to withdraw from UT.

After making sure his scholarships would remain intact and conferring with his parents, Wright took the job. "You can imagine the surprise of my parents, both UT educators themselves," Wright says.

Wright still remembers the night Gore conceded the race. As the Secret Service began moving the campaign staffers upstairs to allow Gore a private moment with his close friends and family, Marc Ginsberg, the campaign's co-coordinator for national security, pulled Wright aside.

"He said, 'Well, I'm one of those close friends. Take your badge off, you're with me,'" Wright recalls.

Since that race, Wright says he's been hooked on the campaign industry. He has worked as the communications director for Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen's re-election campaign, Mike Beebe's race for governor in Arkansas and Hillary Clinton's 2008 run for presidential office.

Despite Wright's unconventional career path, he maintains that every risk he took prepared him for the uncertain job market beyond UT. "It's a journey, not a formula," Wright says. "That's what it was for me."

By contrast, a friend of Wright's followed the traditional 4-year

Photo by Hayley Brundige

> "You have to be able to make people care about what you're writing. It's the ability to not just think about what comes next, but what comes after that, what happens three moves down the chessboard."
>
> — Isaac Wright

track, completing his degree with good grades and sufficient internship experience. By the time Wright finished his five years of stalled undergraduate studies, his friend had already completed his master's degree. Despite that extra diploma, though, Wright was a more competitive job applicant.

"I hired him as my deputy," Wright says. "The difference was the professional experience that I had."

In 2008, Wright started his own business, Wright Strategies, with only a laptop and the $1,500 his parents had given him for Christmas. His business quickly took off, giving him the opportunity to work for a variety of Democratic campaigns in Maryland, Indiana, California, Michigan, North Carolina and other states.

Wright says his daily responsibilities vary and noted that he once prepared a three-hour PowerPoint explaining the work his profession entails.

"That's probably more than you want to hear on a Sunday afternoon," Wright says, laughing.

Mostly, Wright says, the job consists of strategic planning and creative thinking. "You have to be able to make people care about what you're writing," he says. "It's the ability to not just think about what comes next, but what comes after that, what happens three moves down the chessboard."

Wright says he was a "kid in a candy store" when he worked on his first campaign, touring Air Force Two and discussing "Meet the Press" with Tim Russert on the phone in the middle of the night. Today, however, Wright describes his work as much broader than that, encompassing the fundraising, fieldwork and data analysis vital to a political campaign.

"I had almost a myopic view of campaign communications that was only press and media-oriented," he says of his initial impressions of the field. "So often that becomes a stereotype."

Now, Wright has focused his efforts on the 2016 presidential election, hoping to "keep candidates honest" and supporting Hillary Clinton in a potential bid. He calls himself a "glutton for punishment," working 16-hour days in "an industry that isn't known for its lucrative pay."

"I love what I do because I work for people I can believe in," Wright says. "And when you do that, you're really living your dream, regardless of where you show up for work everyday." S

Tyler Summitt runs drills with the Lady Techsters.

A Legacy of Leadership

Raised in the orange limelight, Tyler Summitt has made the court his own

BY EMILEE LAMB

For Tyler Summitt, only three things matter: faith, family and basketball.

And when the 2014 Communication Studies Alumnus of the Year was weighing whether to take his budding career to Ruston, La., his considerations matched accordingly: a conversation with God, a conversation with his wife and a conversation with his mentors.

Now, at just 24 years old, the son of legendary Lady Vols coach Pat Summitt is beginning his inaugural season as head coach of the Louisiana Tech Lady Techster basketball program.

"Growing up, there were a few teams on our schedule, on my mom's schedule, that we would circle every year," Summitt says of the old rivalry between the Lady Vols and the Lady Techsters. "There are just certain teams that are the biggest teams in the nation, and Louisiana Tech is one of those."

The new job came with an added perk — fulfilling a lifelong dream.

"Honestly, I don't remember not wanting to be a basketball coach," Summitt says. "All my friends were saying, 'I want to be a policeman. I want to be a fireman.' I said, 'I want to be a basketball coach.' That never changed."

While Summitt is enjoying his role at the helm of a Division-I team, he hasn't yet forgotten his Tennessee roots. Summitt was a Vol before he could pronounce the word, growing up on the sidelines and watching his mother transform players into outstanding athletes and smart, confident young women. The benching of Candace Parker against DePaul for missing curfew, the expulsion of Chamique Holdsclaw from a practice, the constant pursuit of perfection in Kelly Jolly (now Kelly Harper)– these are the memories Summitt remembers most. Today he applies his mother's mentality to his own coaching, claiming he is notorious for high expectations.

"You know, as coaches we don't really know if we were successful until 20 years from now when we see our players in the workforce and see them succeeding," Summitt says. "If they're succeeding, then we know we instilled the right values in them in college."

Joan Cronan, former UT women's athletics director and a friend of Pat, watched Summitt grow up and now praises the man he has become.

"I think Tyler Summitt's blood will always be orange, but what a great position of influence to start from to get the head coaching job at Louisiana Tech," Cronan says. "Simply stated, Tyler is a winner." S

Photo courtesy of Tyler Summitt

Jesse Smithey putts on the synthetic green in his new workplace.

Photo by Hannah Cather

Seeing Green

Prep sports 'legend' leaves daily paper for more synthetic pastures

BY TROY PROVOST-HERON

Jesse Smithey went from covering players on the field to selling the field they play on.

In September, Smithey, who worked at the Knoxville News Sentinel for 12 years, decided to leave the newspaper business and re-enter the workforce as a salesman.

Smithey concedes the decision to leave the News Sentinel was one of the hardest he's ever made, but it was actually something that he learned through covering high school sports helped him make the decision.

"It's funny because I've written so many coach resignation stories and a lot of those guys said that they knew when their heart wasn't in it as much as it used to be, then it was time to move on," Smithey says. "That just kind of stayed with me and I felt like I had done all I could on the preps level, and I was just ready for a new challenge."

So instead of packing up his pens and recorder for another newspaper, Smithey decided to clean out his desk and enter another field all together.

Smithey now works as a business developer for Playrite, a Tennessee-based company that builds and installs sporting surfaces across the state.

And it didn't take long for Smithey to realize that Playrite was the place he wanted to be employed.

In fact, it only took one look at the synthetic putting green located at the entrance of the company's office for Smithey to be on board.

"I walked in the first day for my interview and saw it and was like 'Where do I sign?'" Smithey says. "It's certainly an eye-catching piece, and we try to encourage as many people as we can to come check out what we are doing here."

Smithey, however, didn't leave his position as the man behind PrepXtra coverage without hearing a good deal of praise, even being called a "legend" by some of his colleagues.

"It was flattering," Smithey says. "You don't get that until you're about to leave. Most of the time you're getting told what you did wrong, but you don't really know what type of impact you make on a community until something like that happens."

Smithey confesses that he hasn't been able to quit preps coverage "cold turkey," stating that he still covers games on Friday nights as a freelancer for the News Sentinel, as well as makes a few appearances on radio and television to talk about the high school football scene.

But the days of daily prep coverage have passed. Instead, Smithey spends his days selling turf — and putting on it. S

Outside of Communications Room 321 hangs a plaque commemorating Larry Patrick's donations to the college.

Radio Flyer

Larry Patrick has built his fortune in media brokering, but originally, he only had eyes for reporting

BY HANNA LUSTIG

The thick silver plaque is emblazoned with his likeness, hanging neatly outside the auditorium bearing his name. Eyes crinkling, frozen mid-smile, the silhouette of Larry Patrick is a familiar sight to flustered students dashing to class. They don't always look up as they throw open the heavy wooden door, or even slow their pace to appreciate the philanthropic alumnus depicted. Like Patrick himself, the plaque is a permanent fixture in the College of Communication and Information—a presence so constant it nearly escapes notice.

It's ironic, considering Patrick's generosity toward the college: $5,000 to WUTK to help purchase a new transmitter and tower, $1 million to establish the Herb Howard Distinguished Professorship in honor of his former teacher, then an additional $5 million estate gift to later re-establish that professorship as a faculty chair. His intangible gifts—years of service to CCI's Board of Visitors and various fundraising committees—have been no less valuable. "I've done well, and now it's time at this point in my life to spend much more time thinking about giving things back," says Patrick, now 66 years old.

A journalist-turned-media broker, Patrick is undeniably CCI's biggest donor and most influential champion, not to mention a close friend CCI Dean Mike Wirth. In fact, it was Patrick who convinced Wirth to accept that job. "He lives on an airplane and travels like crazy and is constantly in motion," Wirth says. "He's a bigger than life kind of guy if you look at all the things he's done and all the things he's accomplished."

But on this sunny Friday afternoon in October, he isn't the entrepreneurial Larry Patrick, who owns 18 radio stations and co-owns 13 large-market TV stations. He isn't a millionaire with a Wikipedia page. He is simply a former student, a guest speaker invited to discuss radio and television in the digital age, a mere Volunteers fan in town for the Florida game. "If you give 'em some cash, they'll name something for you," he jokes, eliciting a light collective laugh from the undergraduates gathered to hear him speak.

He humbly glosses over his many professional accolades and the two distinguished alumni awards he's won, shaking off the honors as if slightly embarrassed. But there is no concealing his remarkable career.

Someday, he wanted to own a radio or TV station, he told the professor in 1969. A station like those he'd visited as a child, the ones who ran advertisements for his father's car dealership. The instructor laughed, a little condescendingly. It was odd to meet such an ambitious student, someone so young and so certain.

Photo by Hannah Cather

> "UT was really good to me.... They were always the nicest professors that cared the most." — Larry Patrick

Even then, as an undergraduate at the University of Kentucky, Larry Patrick was hurtling toward a career in broadcast media.

But it was the work he produced for the local CBS affiliate station that sealed his fate. It was a three-part series about blak lung, an illness his classmate, the daughter of a miner, had mentioned. The press wasn't talking about the men suffering in Kentucky mines, their pained, heaving coughs and slow, suffocating deaths.

"I learned all the production stuff pretty quickly. In fact, I learned all of that before I ever learned it in class and class was boring compared to this. This is real-world stuff," Patrick says.

After two days on site, Patrick produced a package that portrayed the disease and its victims with visceral clarity — the wrinkled faces of fathers who would not live to see their children grow up, who work below the ground where few would venture by choice. It ran in its entirety in Lexington, but Patrick also sent the series to the executive producer of the "CBS Evening News." Three nights later, a two-minute version reached 20 million American homes, sparking calls for reform across the nation. "Telling stories. That's what TV should be. That's what radio should be. It should paint pictures, tell stories," Patrick says. "Show the human side of it and not just be sensational."

Triumphant, Patrick resolved to keep telling stories of substance, stories that exposed injustices and, hopefully, prompted change. And when he arrived in the Scruffy City to pursue his master's degree at UT, he often did. He once wrote about the rusty, abandoned cars peppering Knoxville's landscape, which often attracted children seeking somewhere to play. Patrick was delighted when city officials immediately responded, sending cruisers to every neighborhood and rounding up nearly 200 cars.

"You're trying to do something that lifts the community and solves problems and explains things, not just 'Here's all the blood and gore,'" Patrick says.

Yet, Patrick's long-term goal remained unchanged. He was the son of a businessman with a promise to keep — an old promise to a professor in Kentucky. A doctorate and a law degree later, Patrick accepted a job with the National Association of Broadcasters — an organization filled with media brokers willing to share their trade secrets in exchange for free lunches. "I did the same to a guy who was a very, very good broker. He said, 'I'll tell you what. It'll take two days to go through the whole thing. You buy the beer and you pay for the food. We'll sit out by the pool and you can either tape it or take notes and I'm going to tell you everything I know.'"

After four years of subtle coercion and another three years of independent consulting, he bought his first station and called his former professor to teasingly share the news.

Forgoing the podium, Patrick begins his lecture, sitting atop a table in his smooth gray suit. He tells the producers and anchors and editors of tomorrow that, yes, there are jobs for those who earn them. For those who love this industry enough to chase it relentlessly, adapting as it speeds toward the future. For those who can't repress the urge to find and report the truth.

He tells them there is hope, even in this competitive job market.

"UT was really good to me. … They were always the nicest professors that cared the most. If I can do something in their honor to help other students down the road, that would be great."

Patrick claims he will retire soon, maybe in two years, or five. He'd like to escape tech-heavy modern life, take up residence closer to Yellowstone, do some traveling, fund a few more community construction projects in developing countries. Slow down, he explains, kick back and enjoy the freedom.

But then again, Patrick seems to revel in the volatile nature of his work. Perhaps kicking back simply isn't in the cards. Not yet, at least.

"I may never retire. That would be very hard for me." S

AN OPEN BOOK


Marcellus Turner

Always willing to turn a new page, this Seattle librarian has built a storied career

BY JORDAN ACHS

Marcellus Turner, 2014 Information Science Alumnus of the Year, considers himself very lucky.

"I have been fortunate in a rather long career to have worked in both academic and public libraries of all sizes in several areas of the country," Turner says. "And that is an opportunity that I know others haven't received."

Capitalizing on that opportunity, Turner has followed his career from the suburbs of Denver to the rolling farmlands of Rockford, Ill., with pit stops in Tacoma, Wash., and Atlantic City, N.J. He's also held several positions with libraries in Tennessee and Louisiana. Today, the 1988 UT grad is the top librarian in the Seattle Public Library System, overseeing 27 locations throughout the city, more than 600 staff members and a multimillion-dollar budget. There, he spends his days gathering community feedback and curating print and digital materials.

Turner's proudest accomplishments, however, are not his own. They belong to the students he has helped through initiatives like the Global Reading Challenge, a reading comprehension competition between 48 elementary schools from the Seattle Public School District. "To see all of these kids, their teachers, principals, parents, siblings and classmates at the finals cheering their teams on with signs, cheers and celebration is truly impactful," Turner says.

Fittingly, Turner was a precocious child himself, always volunteering to put books away and cut out snowflakes for bulletin boards. But it wasn't until becoming a graduate student at UT and meeting his new roommates that he began to consider "librarian" a viable career path. Soon after, he made the switch from speech pathology and audiology to information science.

"I ended up driving to class from time-to-time and I found myself engaging with them about the program and work," Turner says, "and within two quarters, I switched majors and never looked back."

Despite days filled with hour-long meetings, countless emails and, of course, more meetings, Turner still stays involved with the College of Communication and Information. For the last two years, he has sat on the Board of Visitors in addition to serving as a guest speaker for School of Information Sciences. Clearly, working with youth is Turner's second passion.

"I'm a big believer in creating experiences that impact memories of a student's time in school," Turner says. "I have wonderful opportunities to hear from students in the programs to hear what we as a body can do to support the educational and learning experiences of the students during their tenure at UT." S

Photo courtesy of Marcellus Turner

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR


Charlie Tombras

He inherited an agency from his dad–and now he's passing it on to his son

BY VICTORIA ROBINSON

Advertising man Charlie Tombras is surrounded by reminders of his many accomplishments, from the National Addy awards displayed on his desk to the large trout mounted on the wall behind him.

But the Tombras Group president and CEO isn't resting on his past successes. At age 73, he remains actively involved at the Knoxville-based ad agency bearing his family's name. He steps in on creative briefings at the front end and reviews the work in progress before it goes to clients. He also continues to be a force in recruitment. "There's no one hired in the Tombras Group that doesn't come through me," Tombras says. "So my stamp is on every person that comes in here."

Advertising runs in his blood. His father founded the business in 1946. It has now become one of the few third-generation ad agencies, with his son Dooley working as executive vice president.

However, it was never a given that Charlie Tombras would join the company. "You know how some kids, they're pressured to do things and they will choose the exact opposite? My dad wisely never ever pressured me," Tombras says. "In fact, I never recall one time him ever even asking me if I was interested in going into the advertising business."

After going through ROTC and graduating from UT in 1964 (with a bachelor's in advertising), Tombras joined the Army, where he spent a tour in Vietnam with the 82nd airborne division. He started working for his father the day after he got back. The firm has been launching Southeastern campaigns for McDonald's since 1972, including scratch-made biscuits and Mickey D's sweet tea. It soon grew into one of the largest full-service digital advertising companies in the South.

Glance around Tombras's office or take a look at his personal style— cowboy boots, a button-down shirt tucked into jeans —and it is easy to discern his interests are not only within the advertising world. He takes any chance he can to escape to his ranch in Colorado. "I spent about half of my vacations through my business career chasing records around the world in fishing," Tombras says. "I set eight world records and still hold I think four of them."

And the award-winning streak has extended to UT life. He received CCI's 2013 Donald G. Hileman Distinguished Allumni Award. He is also a member of CCI's Board of Visitors. Tombras feels fortunate his son is taking over leadership of the firms. But make no mistake, he plans to continue working until his last breath. "My dad worked until the day before he died," Tombras says. "He worked on a Friday and died out on his boat fishing on a Saturday morning. And you know, that's not too bad really. I hope I'd be that lucky." S

Photo courtesy of Charlie Thombras

CLASS NOTES

June 2013 – October 2014

1964

Linda Jennings Higgins was recently appointed to the Tennessee Historical Commission by Governor Bill Haslam. She also serves as the Madison County Historian.

1970

Bruce Colbert is an actor, filmmaker and author. He recently published a collection of short fiction entitled, A Tree on the Rift (Lummox Press, Louisiana).

Jeff Schenkel is owner of La Nueva Voz, a community newspaper in Pomona, California.

1972

Richard Robyn is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Washington Program for Kent State University. He was the winner of Kent State's 2010 Outstanding Teaching Award.

1979

Robert Cox is Director of Communications and Public Outreach for UCLA. He has worked for ad agencies in the Los Angeles area for the past thirty years including JWT and Grey.

1982

Scott Black is VP of Marketing and Business Development for InterDesign Architects in Pittsboro, Indiana.

1986

Richard Baxter is Dean of the College of the Arts at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia.

1989

Josie Ballin is Director of Marketing, Programming and Teen Philanthropy for the Jewish Foundation of Memphis.

1992

Daren Redman is an Artist-in-Residence at the Grand Canyon National Park, North Rim for 2015. She will hike to the floor of the canyon; take photos and hand-dye in low water emersion- fabrics to match the geology. She will then install a large scale textile installation at the North Rim. Her community outreach is to teach low water emersion Indigo to the park guests. When she returns to her community in Brown County, Indiana, she will recreate the large textile installation of over 175 yards of cottons and silks in Bloomington, Indiana.

1994

Eric Mazetis is Operations Manager for Orlando Health.

Tarvis Thompson-Pace is a Senior Communications Director at AT&T's Atlanta Corporate Communications office. She and her husband Bryan, a UT forestry alum, have a baby boy, Parker Overton Pace.

1997

Richard Goins is Director of Corporate Communications for KBR, Inc. in Cypress, Texas.

Dan Hellie moved to Los Angeles in August 2013 to become host of NFL Total Access on the NFL Network. Prior to moving to L.A., he was the sports anchor at WRC-TV, the NBC O&O in his hometown of Washington DC for seven years.

David Paul Rabalais is the Head of North America Marketing for Aggreko in Houston, Texas.

1999

Ashley Engler is Vice President of Employee Engagement for Edelman in New York City.

Steven McClung is Dean of Faculty and Research at Stetson School of Business and Economics at Mercer University in Atlanta, Georgia.

2000

James Glover is Showrunner and Supervising Producer at BASE Productions in Hollywood, California.

2001

Dorie Turner Nolt is Press Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education in Washington DC.

2002

Christy White is a Communications Consultant for the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta, Georgia.

2004

Tiffany Smith is the Manager of Public Relations at Power Plan in Atlanta, Georgia.

2008

Melissa Warren Hudson is Public Relations and Marketing Manager for Applied Global Technologies in Atlanta, Georgia. She is married to Andrew Hudson, UT Bus. Admin. '08.

Anna Myint is an assistant buyer at Macys in New York

City.

2010
Megan Baker is Program Coordinator for Monroe Carell, Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

2011
Sara Horne is Legislative Recorder and Archival Assistant for the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville.

2012
Suzanna McCloskey is the Communications Specialist for American Floral Endowment in Alexandria, Virginia.

Kristyn Royster is Assistant to the Chief of Staff in U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander's Office in Washington DC.

2013
Nathaniel Evans is Assistant Professor of Advertising at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia.

Ashley Siferd served as a volunteer with Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos El Salvador until July 2014.

2014
Chandler White is a student teaching assistant at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She was accepted into the Master's program for the UT School of Information Sciences.

The Torchbearer

Photo by Katrina Roberts

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The faculty of the University of Tennessee College of Communication and Information (CCI) provide world-class education, research, and innovative programming of the highest quality. Thanks to the generosity of alumni, friends and supporters like you, we are able to meet the challenges associated with preparing students to become successful communication and information professionals in an ever changing global society.

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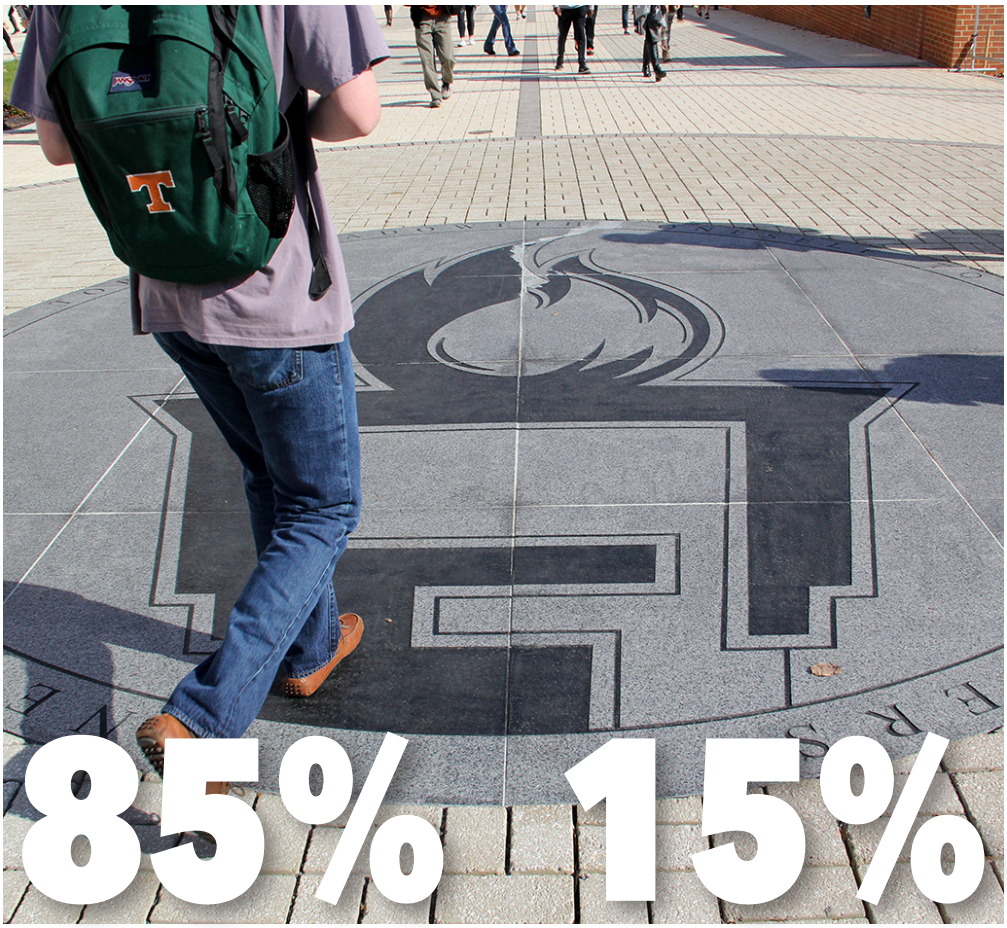
Helen Smith
Natalie Smith
Virgie Smith
Harvey Smith
Stacey Smith
Elizabeth Smith
Sonja Spell
Katherine Spencer
Cecily Spencer-Lilly
Cheryl Standifer
Judith & C.E. Statzer
Todd & Tammy Steed
Dr. Andrew Steen
Dr. Sara Stone
Christine Stover
Brandon & Ester Strasser
Marshall Stratton
Dr. David Sumner
Dr. Sam Swan
Treasure Swanson
Jenny Tang
Julie Tate
Lindsay Taylor
Andrew Temple
Graham Thomas
Richard Thompson
Anna Thomsen
Ronald Tipps, Jr.
Louise Tittsworth
Darryl Torrell
Leslie Toth
Chelsea Towers
Ravyn Towns
David Toye
Paige Travis
Tommy & Melissa Trent
Robert Tucker
Jeanne Ullian
Chris Van Beke
Michael Van Huisen
Sam & Mary Ann Venable
R. J. Vogt
Tiffany Wade
Sandra Waldrip
Celia Walker
Dr. Kandi Walker & Samuel Julian
Vance Walker
Danielle Walker
Mary Anne Walker
Candace Walsh
Ruth Wampler
Kathy Warner
Anna Watkins
Patrick Wells
Robert West, III
Kea Wheeler
Dr. Candace & Mark White
Patrick White
Rebecca Whitefield
James & Kerri Whitehead
Dr. Erin Whiteside
Rebecca Williams
Bill & Wanda Williams
Rev. Trennie Williams, Sr.
Ethan Willis
John Willis
Amanda Wilson
Jamie Wilson
Catherine Wilt
Patsey & Buford Winfrey
Annette Winston
Andrew Wiseman
Kathi Wong
Evelyn Wood
Jonathan Worley
Marjorie Yeomans
Dr. Germaine Young & Gary Ferguson
Dr. Awa Zhu
Sarah Zimmerman

The Back Page

Everyone knows the legend: If you step on the Pedestrian Walkway seal, you won't graduate in four years. Is the same true for the new seal on the Pedestrian Bridge by Haslam Business Building?



Percentage of students who answered "no" in Scoop poll

Percentage of students who answered "yes" in Scoop poll

"I believe that students walk around it out of respect of our university and the Volunteer Creed."

"Let's all step on it and see."

"I honestly don't know. I'm just a freshman."

"I know it is not the same seal that we are forbidden to step on. But I still avoid stepping on it. I AM GRADUATING!"

Photo by Hannah Cather